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THE

WORKS

OF THE

REVEREND AND LEARNED

ISAAC WATTS, D.D.

CONTAINING, BESIDES HIS

SERMONS, AND ESSAYS ON MISCELLANEOUS SUBJECTS,

SEVERAL ADDITIONAL PIECES,

Selected from his Manuscripts

BY THE

REV. DR. JENNINGS, AND THE REV. DR. DODDRIDGE, IN 1753:

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED,

MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

COMPILED

BY THE REV. GEORGE BURDER.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

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SECOND VOLUME.

DEATH AND HEAVEN, &c.

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DEATH AND HEAVEN,

OR THE

LAST ENEMY CONQUERED,

AND

SEPARATE SPIRITS MADE PERFECT:

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE

RICH VARIETY OF THEIR EMPLOYMENTS AND PLEASURES;

ATTEMPTED IN

TWO FUNERAL DISCOURSES,

IN MEMORY OF

SIR JOHN HARTOPP, BART. AND HIS LADY,

Deceased.

WITH

THE PREFACE TO THE GERMAN TRANSLATION.

DEDICATION.

To Sir JOHN HARTOPP, Bart.

SIR,

TO descend from such parents as yours, is no common favour of Heaven; nor is it the blessing of every descendant to inherit the natural virtues of his progenitors: yet I know that you esteem your happiness incomplete, without the imitation of their heavenly graces, and the attainment of their sublimest hopes.

Forgive me, dear Sir, if I take the liberty to say, it is with a sort of fond pleasure that I have beheld your victories over the most dangerous scenes and temptations of youth; and every step in your progress towards perfect triumph, is an addition to my joy. The world and the church hold their eyes fixed upon you, while God and angels, and, perhaps, the souls of your sacred ancestors, look down from on high to observe your conduct. Never was there a more proper time to awaken your zeal for the religion of Christ, than in a day of spreading infidelity and heathenism; nor can there be a fitter season to exert your utmost efforts for the support of serious piety, than in an age of numerous and growing iniquities. Your just sense of religious liberty will shine in its fairest glory, while you stand as a barrier against the fearful inroads of a wild and unbounded licentiousness. Nor can your attachment to the cause and interest of the Protestant Dissenters appear with more honour, than while they are, defamed and scorned by the proud and the profane, and while their own imprudent contests stand in need of your candour and charity.

Many are the advantages you enjoy for this purpose. Divine Providence has placed your circumstances above the bribery of a flattering world, and a corrupt generation. Your superior sense has no need to stand in awe of fools, who make a mock of sin and godliness. Let your native modesty and gentleness then arm itself with an unshaken courage in the cause of God; and fear not the malicious scoff and censure of sinners, since you have nothing to expect or hope from them.

Go on, Sir, and prosper in the things of heaven, and become an example of shining holiness in a degenerate world. Let the libertines of the nation know, that you also dare to think freely for yourself, and with all that freedom of thought you dare to choose the paths of your holy ancestors.

The peculiar favour of God has provided you a consort, whose natural and pious accomplishments and assistances will attend you through all the way. These will soften the seeming severities of strict religion with the tenderest endearments of life, and make the pleasures of it double and transcendent. The name, the title, and the character of your excellent father deceased, require and demand an eminent degree of goodness in his successor. The pious lady your mother, now in heaven, would have rejoiced in the present prospect, and would have purchased your felicity even with her own life; and your numerous relatives around you suspend their happiness upon yours. The piety you have shewn towards your worthy parents from your infancy, and the affectionate honours which you now pay their memory, give me further assurance that this is your

aim, and your glorious ambition. And that you may ever keep in mind their example and your duty, you have commanded me to make public these discourses, which were framed on the occasion of their decease.

You well know, Sir, I am no friend to loose panegyric, nor am I wont to bestow it on the dead or the living. What I have written of the late Sir John Hartopp at the end of the second Discourse, is the first attempt that ever I made of concluding a funeral sermon with a distinct and particular character of the deceased, through the whole space of twenty-three years of my ministry; and surely the world will not envy nor detract from the just honours of a name so much beloved. As for the lady, your mother, she affected retirement to such a degree, that it would have placed her in a wrong light to have drawn out her virtues at length, and set them to public view. I have therefore only interspersed a few hints of her eminent piety, as the text and argument led me into them: And indeed this is the utmost that I have ever done before on such occasions.

I have much reason to ask pardon that I have so far enlarged these Discourses, and especially the last; for I hate the thoughts of making any thing in religion heavy or tiresome: But having entertained myself many a time with some of these meditations on the business and the blessedness of separate spirits, I took this opportunity of shewing them to the world, enshrined in the lustre of two such names as adorn my title-page.

To render the reading of them yet more agreeable to yourself, and to all your friends, I have cast them into distinct sections, that my readers may leave off almost where they please, and peruse so much of them at one time as suits their present inclination and convenience.

You know, Sir, I pretend to no authority to pronounce effectual blessings upon you; but you will accept the sincere good wishes of a man that loves you, and is zealous for your felicity in the upper and lower worlds. May the best of mercies descend daily on yourself, your lady, and your little offspring! May the closet, the parlour, and public assemblies, be constant witnesses of your piety; and the house where a Sir John Hartopp dwells, be a house of prayer and of praise in every generation, nor the name be extinguished in your family till the heavens be no more! May the ladies, your sisters, live happily under the sweet influence of that mutual affection that has been always remarkably cultivated amongst you! Their interests are your care: And I am well persuaded that their solicitude and tender concern for your welfare, will ever deserve and find such returns of love, as I have long observed with delight! May the prayers of your progenitors in past ages be answered in hourly benefits descending on you all, and be fruitful of blessings in ages yet to come! Such a lovely scene, with such a long and joyful prospect, will advance the satisfactions of my life, and give pleasure even in a dying hour, to him who had once the honour to be your affectionate monitor, and must ever write himself,

SIR,

Your obliged, humble servant,

July 6, 1772. I. WATTS.

THE

PREFACE

TO

THIS BOOK OF DEATH AND HEAVEN,

WHEN IT WAS TRANSLATED INTO THE GERMAN LANGUAGE, AND PUBLISHED AT HALLE, IN SAXONY, 1727.

TO THE READER.

HERE is communicated to you a treatise, in which the late pious Mr. Frank, professor of divinity at Halle, found so much edification and satisfaction, that he engaged an able person to translate it into our German tongue, to make others partake of the same spiritual benefit. This treatise consists of two funeral sermons, which an English divine, who perhaps is still living, composed on the death of two eminent persons, which he enlarged afterwards for their publication. The subject of the first is death, taken from 1 *Cor.* xv. 26. The second is heaven, from *Heb.* xii. 22. From this last he takes an occasion of flying with his thoughts into the blessed mansions of the just made perfect, by giving us not only a very probable and beautiful idea of the glory of a future life in general, but also an enumeration of the many sorts of employments and pleasures that are to be met with there.

After the several false notions people of different complexions have of eternal life are laid open, the author of the preface goes on, and quotes some German authors, who have written upon that subject, and says at last: I hope nobody will presume to aver this doctrine to have been so far exhausted by those authors, that nothing new could be said upon it; for several learned writers in England, who in meditating and searching after hidden truths, have shewn an extraordinary capacity, prove the contrary; and amongst others there is the treatise called *The Future State*, published 1683, by a gentleman whose name is concealed, which appeared in French 1700, and is now printed in German with a preface of the famous Dr. Pritius, senior, at Frankfurt ad Mænum. There is among Sir R. Blackmore's Essays one upon the future beatitudes. The traces of these two English gentlemen are followed by our present English divine, I. WATTS, who, however, in many points has outdone these his predecessors, and advanced a step farther in his contemplations.

Though the first sermon contains many elegant passages worthy to be read, yet the latter seems to be a more elaborate piece, because it sets the doctrine of eternal life in a greater light, and enriches it with many probable inferences drawn from the word of God. He proposes his excellent thoughts in most emphatical terms, in that beautiful order, and

with such a vivacity of style, that he keeps the reader in a continual attention, and an eager desire to read on. It is plain the author's mind was so taken up with the beauty of heaven, that *his mouth could not but speak from the abundance of his heart.* There is a secret unction in his expressions, which leaves a sweet savour in the reader's heart, and raises in him a desire after the blessed society he speaks of. And though the reader should not entirely agree with the author's notions, yet he will not peruse this treatise without a particular edification and blessing. I cannot deny but the author's conjectures may be sometimes carried a little too far, but that doth not prejudice the subject in the least. Besides, he is generally so happy as to find some arguments for his probable notions in the word of God, and to answer very dexterously all the objections that can be made against him.

May the ever-living God give a blessing to this work, and grant that those sweet and relishing truths proposed in these leaves may make such an impression upon the minds of the readers as those noble truths deserve. May he prevent all the abuse of this delightful subject, and never permit it to be turned into a mere dry or fruitless speculation; but may he inflame every reader with a holy desire after a blessed eternity, and rouse and excite all those that have not begun yet to tread the path of salvation, to enter into the same without delay, that they may not rest in a mere delightful prospect of the land of Canaan, nor be for ever excluded by their unbelief from the eternal enjoyment of it.

Given at Halle, July 10, 1727,

JOHN JACOB RAMBACH, *S. Theol. Prof. Ordinar.*

DISCOURSE I.

THE CONQUEST OVER DEATH.

Described in a Funeral Discourse in Memory of the Lady Hartopp, deceased.

THE INTRODUCTION.

I PERSUADE myself that none of you are unacquainted with that mournful providence that calls me to the service of this day.* The words which were borrowed from the lips of the dying, I am desired to improve for the instruction and comfort of those that live. They are written in

1 COR. XV. 26.

THE LAST ENEMY THAT SHALL BE DESTROYED IS DEATH.

WHEN a nation hath lain for whole ages under the power of some mighty tyrant, and has suffered perpetual ravages from his hands, what gladness runs through the land, at the sure prediction of his ruin? and how is every inhabitant pleased while he hears of the approaching downfal of his great enemy! "For this is he that has slain my father or my mother, my children, or my dearest relatives, and is still making havoc of the remnant of my friends, while I myself stand in hourly danger." This pleasure grows up into more perfect joy, when we are assured this is the last tyrant that shall arise, *the last enemy* that shall afflict us; for he shall have no successor, and we shall be for ever free. Such should be the rejoicing of all the saints, when they hear so desirable and divine a promise as the words of my text; *The last enemy that shall be destroyed, is death.*

To improve this glorious proposition, let us consider these four things, with a reflection or two upon each of them:

I. How death appears to be an enemy to the saints.

II. Why it is called the last enemy, or the last that shall be destroyed.

III. How it is to be destroyed, and what are the steps or gradual efforts towards its destruction.

IV. What are the advantages that the saints receive by the destruction of this last enemy.

SECTION I.

DEATH AN ENEMY EVEN TO GOOD MEN.

THE first enquiry is, how, or in what sense death appears to be an enemy to the saints? That it is in general an enemy to human nature, is sufficiently evident from its first

* Nov. 9, 1711, the lady Hartopp died, and this discourse was delivered at Stoke-Newington, Nov. 25, following.

introduction into the world; for it was brought in as an execution of the first threatening given to Adam in paradise, *Gen.* ii. 17. *In the day thou eatest thou shalt die.* It came in as a punishment for sin, and every punishment in some respect opposes our interest and our happiness. When it seized on man at first, and planted the seeds of mortality in his nature, he then began to be deprived of that peace and health, that vigour and immortality which he possessed before his fall, till at last it brought him down to the dust; and ever since, all the sons of Adam have found and felt it an enemy to their natures.

To sinners indeed it is an enemy in a more dreadful sense, and its attendants are more terrible a thousand fold. For besides all the common miseries of the flesh which they sustain, it delivers over their spirits into everlasting misery; it finishes their reprieve and their hope for ever; it plunges them at once into all the terrors of a most awakened conscience, and cuts them off from all the amusements and cares of this life, which laid their guilt and their conscience asleep for a season. Death consigns over a sinner to the chains of the grave, and the chains of hell together, and binds and reserves him a prisoner of despair for the most complete torments of the second death.

But I would confine my discourse here only to believers, for it is with respect to them this chapter is written. I know death is often called their friend, because it puts an end to their sins and sorrows; but this benefit arises only from the covenant of grace, which sanctifies it to some good purposes to the children of God. It is constrained to become their friend in some instances, contrary to its own nature and its original design: But there is reason enough, if we take a survey of its own nature, and its present appearances, to call it an enemy still, upon these following accounts:

1. Death has generally many terrible attendants and forerunners when it comes; terrible to nature and the flesh of the most exalted christians.

Here, should I begin to describe the long and dismal train of death, the time would fail me. Shall I mention the sickness and the pain, the sharp anguish of the body, and sometimes the sharper methods of medicine to relieve it, all which prove useless and vain in that day: Shall I recount the tedious and uneasy hours, the tiresome and sleepless nights, when the patient longs for the slow return of the morning; and still when the light breaks, he finds new uneasiness, and wishes for the shadow and darkness again? Shall I speak of the dulness of the natural spirits, and the clogs that hang heavy upon the soul in those hours; so that the better part of man is bound and oppressed, and shut up, and cannot exert itself agreeable to the character of an intellectual being?

Besides, all the designs of the mind are interrupted and broken in death; all that the saint intended to do for God, is cut off at once, and his holy purposes are precluded, which often adds to the trouble of a dying christian: *Psalm* cxlvi. 4. *When man returns to his earth, in that very day his thoughts perish.*

Shall I put you in mind of the sighs and sorrows of dearest friends that stand around the bed all in tears, and all despairing? Shall I speak of the last convulsions of nature, the sharp conflict of the extreme moments, and the struggling and painful efforts of departing life, which none can know fully but those that have felt them, and none of the dead come back to give us an account? Is it possible for us to survey these scenes of misery, and not to believe that the hand of an enemy has been there? The bodies of the saints are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and the members of Christ; 1 *Cor.* vi. 15, 19. Death murders these bodies, these members of the Lord, and ruins these temples to the dust, and may well be called their enemy upon this account.

2. Death acts like an enemy, when it makes a separation between the soul and the body. It divides the nature of man in halves, and tears the two constituent parts of it asunder.

Though this becomes an advantage to the soul of the saint through the covenant and appointment of grace, yet to have such an intimate union dissolved between flesh and spirit carries something of terror in it; and there may be an innocent reluctance in the nature of the best christian against such an enemy as this: therefore St. Paul, in 2 *Cor.* v. 4. does not directly desire *to be uncloathed*, but rather *to be cloathed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life;* that is, to be translated at once into an immortal state. The soul and body have been long acquainted with each other, and the soul has performed almost all its operations by the use of the senses and the limbs: It sees by the eye, it hears by the ear, it acts by the hands, and by the tongue it converses. Now to be separated at once from all these, and to be at once conveyed into a new strange world, a strange and unknown state both of being and action, has something in it so surprizing, that it is a little frightful to the nature of man, even when he is sanctified and fitted for heaven.

And as the soul is dismissed by death into a state of separation, so the body, like a fallen tabernacle, is forsaken, lies uninhabited and desolate. Shall I lead your thoughts back to the bed where your dear relatives expired? and give you a sight of the dead, whose beauty is turning apace into corruption, and all the loveliness of countenance fled for ever? The body, that curious engine of divine workmanship, is become a moveless lump: Death sits heavy upon it, and the sprightliness and vigour of life is perished in every feature and in every limb? Shall we go down to the dark chambers of the grave, where each of the dead lie in their cold mansions, in beds of darkness and dust? The shadows of a long evening are stretched over them, the curtains of a deep midnight are drawn around them, the worm lies under them, and the worm covers them.

A saint is no more exempted from all these frightful attendants of death than a sinner is. Those eyes that have been perpetually lifted up to the God of heaven in prayer, lie closed under ground. That tongue that has spoken much for God in the world, lies silent in death. Those hands that have ministered to the necessities of the saints, and those feet that have gone often to the house of God, death has confined them in his chains. Those natural powers that have been active in the service of the gospel, can speak, can move, can act no more. But I need not recite these things to you, the images of them are too fresh and painful, and sit too heavy upon your remembrance.

3. Death is an enemy to the saint, so far as it hinders him from the enjoyment of his perfect heaven, for it keeps one part of him in the grave for many years or ages.

Let us think of the dust of the ancient martyrs, the dust of the apostles, and the holy prophets: Let us look many ages backward to the dust of David, and Abraham, and Noah, to the dust of Adam, the first of men: How long have their souls waited in heaven, as it were in a widowed estate? How long has their flesh been mingled with common earth, and laid confined under the bands of death, useless to all the glorious purposes of their formation and their being? A tedious extent of time! Four or five thousand years, wherein they have done nothing for God in the body, and in the body received nothing from God? For death hinders a believer from some of the business of heaven, and some of the blessedness of it.

1. From some of the business of heaven: It is only the soul that is then received to

glory, and dwells there alone for a season, while death keeps the body prisoner in the grave; it is only the soul that glorifies its Maker in that upper world, the world of spirits, for the flesh lies silent in the dust: *The grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee*, O Lord; *Isaiah* xxxviii. 18. The body is redeemed with the blood of Christ, as well as the soul, but death puts fetters upon it, and forbids it to serve its Redeemer.

2. The believer is restrained also by death from some of the blessedness of heaven; it is only the soul enjoys the delight, and that too only in its abstracted nature, and pure intellectual capacity; it is cut off by death from all that rich variety of pleasure which rises from its communion with so noble a frame as the body of man is. It has no senses to receive the satisfactions that arise from the material part of heaven: It has no eyes to behold the glorified flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ; no ears to hear his voice; no tongue to converse with its Saviour. And though we are sure there is a holy correspondence between Christ Jesus and separate souls, for we are said *to be present with the Lord, when we are absent from the body;* 2 Cor. v. 8. yet this correspondence cannot be so complete and glorious, as it shall be, when with our eyes we shall see God in the form of a man.

3. It is granted, that the separate heaven of souls is abundant pleasure beyond what we can now conceive or express; and our friends, departed in the faith, enjoy the delightful presence of their Lord, and the heavenly converse of their fellow-spirits. That honoured and deceased saint, whom we this day mourn, dwells with that Jesus with whom she had long been acquainted: She converses with him in heaven, whom she loved much upon earth: She finds herself safe for ever in his hands, to whose care she committed her immortal concerns; and she rejoices in the sight of him above, with whom she held many hours of sweet correspondence by faith here below. Doubtless also, she holds sweet conversation with the holy souls that went to heaven before her. A soul so greatly desirous of spiritual discourse as she was, so constantly prepared for pious conference and mutual communications of sacred knowledge, must needs enjoy that privilege, and that pleasure, in that upper world, where there is nothing all round her, but what is holy and divine. But it is certain she cannot enjoy that perfection of humble society with Christ in his glorified human nature, nor with fellow-saints, while she is deprived of one part of herself, her body lying silent and moveless in the prison of the grave: and she yet waits for the more complete satisfaction of all her hopes, when death her last enemy shall be destroyed, and her body redeemed from the dust, together with the bodies of all the saints. This leads me to the next particular:

4. Death is an enemy to believers, because it divides them for a season from the company of their known and valuable friends, and parts the dearest relatives asunder.

Though dying saints be transmitted into better company, even *to the spirits of the just made perfect*, yet it is a mournful thought to be separated so long from those whom they loved with so strong and just an affection. It adds a sharpness even to the last agonies, when we think we must leave parents, children, or friends behind us, whom we love so tenderly; that we must leave them amidst the sorrows and the temptations of a vain world and a corrupt age; that we must leave them struggling with all the difficulties, the hardships, and the dangers that attend a christian in his travels through this wilderness, and not see their faces again in the flesh, nor converse with them in the manner we were wont to do, till the heavens be no more.

Upon this account also death is a worse enemy to those that survive, for they sustain the biggest loss: It deprives them of their dear and delightful relatives without any

recompence, for the world grows so much the more undesirable to a saint by the death of every friend. Children are torn away from the embraces of their parents, and the wife is seized from the bosom. This is, as it were, tearing the flesh asunder of those whose hearts are joined; this gives occasion to bitter sorrows, to long and heavy complaints. How suddenly are we sometimes deprived of *the desires of the eyes*, and the comforts of life, the ornaments and the supports of our earthly state? And we have lost all their love, and their counsel, and their care; all their sweet sympathy of joys and sorrows, all their agreeable conversation and heavenly advice. What a tedious way have we to walk through without such a guide or helper? We have lost the benefit of their watchful eye, their holy jealousy for our souls, their fervent and daily prayers. But there are records in heaven, where all the prayers of the saints are kept; and God often turns over his register, and, in distant successive years, pours down blessings upon the posterity, and multiplies his graces amongst them, in answer to the requests that were offered up on earth by the saints that are now with God.

5. The last reason I shall mention to prove death an enemy to the saints, is the terror that it fills the mind with long before-hand. There are but few that, in their best estate on earth are got quite above these terrors, and there are none can say, I have been always free from them; so that in the younger days of their christianity at least, all have been afraid of death; and these fears are enemies to our peace. Some spend *all their lives in this bondage of fear*, and that upon different accounts.

A christian of weaker faith cries out within himself, "How shall I pass that awful moment that sets my soul naked before the eyes of a holy God, when I know not whether I am clothed with the righteousness of his Son or no, whether I shall stand the test in that day? I dread that solemn, that important hour that shall put me into an unchangeable state of miseries that are infinite, or of infinite blessedness. How shall I, that am a sinner, stand before that tribunal and that Judge, in whose sight no mortal can be innocent? My evidences for heaven are dark and cloudy, that I cannot read them; they have been often sullied with fresh guilt, and I doubt whether I am new born or no, or reconciled to God. And what if I should be mistaken in this affair of the greatest moment? The mistake can never be rectified; therefore I shake at the thoughts of death, that hour of decision; for my faith is weak."

Another saint of a strong and lively faith, but of a timorous temper, cries out, "How shall I bear the agonies and the pangs of death? I am not afraid to enter into eternity; the grace of *Christ*, and his gospel, have given me hope and courage enough to be dead; but I am still afraid of dying; it is a hard and painful work, how shall I sustain the sharp conflict? I shiver at the thoughts of venturing through that cold flood that divides betwixt this wilderness and the promised land."

Another christian is too much unacquainted with the world of spirits, with the nature of the separate heaven, with the particular business and blessedness of holy souls departed; and he is afraid to venture out of this region of flesh and blood, into a vast and unknown world. Though he has good hope through grace, that he shall arrive safe at heaven; yet the heavenly country is so unknown a land, and the valley of entrance to it so dark, that he fears to pass into it through the shadow of death.

Another is terrified at the thoughts of death, because he knows not how to part with his dear relatives in the flesh, and to leave them exposed to an unkind age and a thousand

dangers. "If I had none to leave behind me, I could die with cheerfulness; but while I think of such a separation, the thought of death has terror in it."

Thus upon various accounts a good man may have fearful apprehensions of dying; and that which carries so much terror about it, may well be called an enemy.

Before we proceed any further, let us make two reflections on the first general head:

I. If death be an enemy to the best of men in so many respects, then we may infer the great evil of sin: For it was sin that brought death into this our world; *Rom.* v. 12. *By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.*

We are too ready to conceive a slight opinion of the evil of sin, because it is so common to the best of men, and so constant an attendant on human nature daily and hourly; we entertain too gentle and harmless thoughts of it, because its biggest evil is of a spiritual kind, and invisible; we see not that infinite Majesty which it dishonours, that spotless holiness of God which it offends, the glory and perfection of that law which is broken by it: We can take but short and scanty notices of the injury that it does to God the supreme Spirit, while we are shut up in tabernacles of flesh. But here in these scenes of death, we may survey the sensible and mighty injury that sin has done to the nature of man, and thence infer how offensive it is to God. By our eyes and our ears, we may be terribly convinced, that it is no little evil that could occasion such spreading and durable mischief.

We cannot frame a just notion of what man was in his state of perfect innocency, in his original beauty, and honour, and immortal frame; and therefore we cannot so well judge of the vastness of the loss which we sustain by sin: but we can see and feel the formidable attendants on death, and learn and believe that it is a root of unknown poisoned bitterness, that has produced such cursed fruit: Especially if we remember that all the sorrows before described, fall upon the saints themselves, even where sin is pardoned, and *death has lost its sting*. But if we descend in contemplation to the endless and unknown misery that waits upon the death of a sinner, and say, all these are the effects of sin; how inexpressibly dreadful will the cause appear? The wise man has pronounced them fools, by inspiration, that make a mock at such mischief; *Prov.* xiv. 9.

II. We may here learn the greatness of the love of Christ, that would venture into the land of death, and conflict with this mighty enemy, and yield to the power of it for a season, for our sakes. *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends;* John xv. 13. *Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he died for us;* 1 John iii. 16. Rom. v. 8.

Many terrible attendants of death did our Lord meet and struggle with beyond what any of his saints can feel. Death, like a lion, ran furious upon him, as it does upon a sinner, its proper prey. He met death in its full strength and dominion, for he had all our sins upon him; and death had its own sharp sting when our Lord entered the combat. There was the wrath of God which was threatened in the broken law to mingle with his pangs and agonies of nature: This made *his soul exceeding sorrowful;* all his inward powers were amazed, and his heart oppressed with heaviness; *Mark* xiv. 33, 34. He was almost overwhelmed in the garden, before the thorns or the nails came near him; and on the cross he complains of the forsakings of God his almighty friend, when death his mighty enemy was just upon him; and all this, saith he, to every believer, I bore for thy sake: My *love was stronger than death.*

SECTION II.

DEATH IS THE LAST ENEMY.

I PROCEED now to the second general proposed, and that is to enquire, in what sense death is said to be the last enemy, or the last that shall be destroyed: For we may join this word last, either to death, or to destruction; and in each sense it affords comfort to the saints.

1. It is the last enemy that the saints have to grapple with in this world. The three great adversaries of a christian are the flesh, the world, and the devil, and they assault him often in this life. Death comes behind, and brings up the rear; the saint combats with this enemy, and finishes all the war. Every believer has listed himself under the banner of Christ, who is the Captain of his Salvation. When he first gives himself up to the Lord, he renounces every thing that is inconsistent with his faith and hope, he abandons his former slavery, undertakes the spiritual warfare, and enters the field of battle. It is a necessary character of the followers of Christ, that they fight with the flesh, subdue corrupt nature, suppress their irregular appetites, give daily wounds to the body of sin; *Col.* iii. 5. *Rom.* viii. 13. They fight against this world; they refuse to comply with the temptations of it, when it would allure them astray from the path of duty; they defy its frowns and discouragements, and break through all its oppositions in their way to heaven; *James* iv. 4. They resist Satan when he tempts them to sin, and vanquish him by *the sword of the Spirit, the word of God;* Eph. iv. 11, 12, 17. and when he accuses them, and attempts to bring terror into their souls, *they overcome him, and cast him down by the blood of the Lamb;* Rev. xii. 10, 11. They are made conquerors over these adversaries in the strength of Christ. Now the pangs of death are the last troublers of their peace; *death is the last enemy* that attacks them, and some have very terrible conflicts with it.

It was in these agonies, in this sharp contention, the words of my text were uttered by that honoured saint whose memory will be always precious, and whose loss we this day mourn. This cheerful language of hope, among many other scriptures, broke out from her lips. Thus lively was her faith in a dying hour. Methinks I hear her speaking the words with a firm trust in the promise; *The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.* And this encouraged her onward through the few remaining struggles of life and pain. It is as if she had said, "I have given myself up long ago to Christ, I engaged myself young in his service, I have fought with sin, I have learned to subdue flesh and sense, and to live by the faith of the Son of God: I have not courted the flatteries of the world, the vain shews of life; and I have been enabled to despise the frowns of it, and been kept stedfast in my profession, in the most discouraging and the darkest times. Through the grace of Christ *I have overcome the evil one;* there remains but one enemy more, whose name is death; and I trust in the same grace still to obtain complete victory." Rejoice ye dear relatives, let all the friends of the deceased rejoice, her name is now written down in heaven amongst the overcomers.

2. Death may be called the last enemy, because it is not utterly destroyed till the resurrection, till Christ hath done all his work upon earth, till he has subdued all his

other adversaries, and made use of death as his slave, to destroy many of them. It is in this sense especially that the words of my text are written by St. Paul; 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25. *Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and all power; for he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed, is death.* With regard to each particular christian, all other enemies are destroyed when he dies, for *whither he goes, they cannot come;* he puts off the body of flesh and of sin together; he leaves every corruption behind him, when he ascends to the company of the spirits of the just made perfect. The smiles and the frowns of this vain and vexing world, are too far off to influence the inhabitants of heaven; and Satan, the tempter and accuser, is for ever forbid entrance at the gates of that holy city. But death holds one part of the saint in his prison, the grave: And though the departed soul has overcome the terrors of this enemy, and triumphs in this expression, *O death, where is thy sting?* yet the body is confined as a prisoner under his power: *But the hour is coming, when those that are dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and live.* All the prisons of the saints shall be broke to pieces, and burnt up, and the keeper destroyed for ever.

Let us make these two reflections on the second general head of this discourse:

I. What abundant encouragement may we derive from hence, to engage us betimes in a war with all the other enemies of our salvation, that having overcome them, we may be assured *death is the last enemy* we shall meet with: And then also we may face death with a braver courage, may conflict with it with better success, may vanquish it by a lively faith, and rejoice in the prospect of its final destruction. The same armour of God, the same divine weapons, and the same almighty assistances by which we have subdued our former adversaries, sin, Satan, and the world, shall be sufficient to gain this conquest too. We cannot begin the holy warfare too soon; none of us are too young to be assaulted by death; but let it come never so early in the morning of our days, it is the last enemy that we can fear, if we are listed in the army of Christ, and have begun the glorious war.

I would address myself to the younger branches of the mourning house, and say, have ye had such a noble example of victory over sin and death in vain? Will ye basely submit to the slavery of the flesh, and yield tamely to the oppositions of this world, which were so bravely resisted by her that is gone before you? Will ye love this world, which is *at enmity with God,* and has ever been at enmity with all the saints? Are ye content to have your names for ever excluded from that honourable list of conquerors, where the names of your ancestors shine before the throne of God, and are recorded with honour in the memory of his churches? Think how dreadful a moment that will be, when you shall look death in the face, if ye have not begun to wage war with sin and Satan before! How dreadful to have many enemies at once assaulting you! the lusts of your own heart, raging desires after the enjoyments of this world, the horrors of conscience, the buffetings of the devil, and the pangs of death. What will ye do in the day of such a visitation? And remember, that though *death be the last enemy* of the saints, it is not thus with sinners; it does but transmit them into the world of damned spirits, where enemies multiply upon them, and grow more outrageous. Besides the bitter anguish of their own conscience, they have the wrath of a God whom they have long provoked, and the malice of evil angels their tormentors, to conflict with to all eternity. *But we*

hope better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak; Heb. vi. 9.

II. What divine comfort is there in my text for aged christians and dying saints, who have been watchful and vigorous in their war with sin, and gained many victories over this world and Satan, who is called the God of it? What a delightful view such persons have, when upon the borders of life! Bear up with divine boldness ye heirs of glory, for you have but one adversary more to fight with: Let your faith and patience, and holy courage, hold out a little longer, and victory and triumph are yours for ever. There is no enemy lies in ambush behind the tomb; when you have passed the bars of death, you are out of the reach of all adversaries. Beyond the grave, the coast is all clear for ever: The country flows with rich and untasted pleasures; every inhabitant is an inward friend, and peace, and joy, and love smile in every countenance. Will an old saint complain that he finds many infirmities attend his age, that his senses are feeble, that his eyes are dim, that Satan now and then arises from hell, and casts a gloom and darkness around his soul, and buffets him sorely in that darkness? Will he complain that his natural spirits are heavy, that the world is troublesome to him, and every thing in life painful? Methinks it is a consolation equal to all these sorrows, that he is just entering into the last field of battle; the last hour of controversy is begun; a few strokes more will decide the strife, and make him an eternal conqueror. *Behold I come quickly*, saith our Lord, *hold fast that which thou hast* gained, *that no man take thy crown;* Rev. iii. 11.

SECTION III.

THE DESTRUCTION OF DEATH.

The third thing we are to inquire, is, how death is destroyed, and what are the steps, or gradual efforts, towards its destruction.

The person that has this honour put upon him to subdue this universal tyrant is our Lord Jesus Christ; so the words inform us all round my text. Though his mediation for sinners was sufficient to have prevailed with God to destroy death at once, yet it was agreed upon in the eternal counsels, that for wise ends and purposes it should be done by degrees. His blood was of sufficient value to have procured for his elect a deliverance from every enemy at once, and a translation to heaven as soon as they were born; but it was wisely concerted betwixt the Father and the Son, that we should pass through temptations, difficulties, and death itself; that by feeling the sharp assaults of our enemies, we might be better acquainted with the greatness of our salvation, and pay a larger tribute of thanks and honours to our deliverer.

The steps whereby death is destroyed, are these:

1. It is subdued by the death of Christ; its sting was then taken away, that is, the guilt of sin; 1 *Cor.* xv. 56, 57. *The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law: but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.* Which verses may be thus explained: Death was the punishment threatened by the law of sin, but Christ, as our surety, having sustained the execution of that threatening, and answered the law by a satisfaction equal to the offence, death has no more power over him. *God has raised him up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it;* Acts ii. 24. And as Christ by his dying is said to *finish*

transgression, and make an end of sin because he has taken away its power to condemn believers, though he has not yet utterly destroyed its being, so he is said to have *abolished death;* 2 Tim. i. 10. Because he has so far diminished, and made void its power, that it shall not do any final mischief to the saints. It is like a serpent whose sting is taken away, and whose teeth are broken out; it may fright us, and do us some injury, but it cannot inflict a venomous or fatal wound. Now the believer, by a lively faith, shares in this victory of Christ over death, and gives thanks to God for it. He knows that though it may hurt his body, and bring it down to the grave for a season, yet it cannot send the soul to destruction, nor confine the body to the dust any longer than Christ shall permit.

2. Death is taken captive and enslaved by Christ at his resurrection and ascension, and made to serve his holy purposes; *Psalm* lxviii. 18. *Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive.* This is spoken of our Lord Jesus, who has taken into his own dominion death and the devil, who led the world captive. The enemy is not escaped out of the hands of this conqueror, but is put under his yoke, and constrained into his service. Death, in its first character, was the very threatening and curse of the law of God, and includes in it all misery: but Christ having borne the curse, has redeemed his people from it; *Gal.* iii. 13. And now he has taken as many as he pleases of the threatenings and terrors of the law into his own new covenant, the covenant of grace; and has sanctified their nature, and made them blessings to the saints; he has turned the curse into a blessing; *Deut.* xxiii. 5. so that afflictions, and pains, and sorrows, and death itself, are no longer a curse to them, for they are ordained by the wisdom and grace of Christ to promote their best interest.

Death, in its original design, was the under servant of God's avenging justice; it was the jailor to bring the soul out of the body before the divine tribunal, there to receive its condemnation to hell. It was the executioner both to torment and to destroy the flesh, and send the spirit into everlasting misery. But Christ having answered all the demands of this avenging justice, has also purchased the sovereignty over death; and though sometimes, when it seizes a saint, it may for the present signify his displeasure, as in 1 *Cor.* xi. 30. yet it always fulfils the designs of his love, and conveys them into his own delightful presence; therefore as soon as we are *absent from the body*, we are said to be *present with the Lord;* 2 Cor. v. 8. and when we depart from the flesh, it is *to be with Christ;* Phil. i. 23. Death was ordained at first to be a slave to Satan, by the righteous appointment of God, both death and the devil are executioners of his wrath; and Satan is said to have some power over death; *Heb.* ii. 14. But Christ, by dying, has subdued Satan, spoiled him of his destroying weapons, has made void his authority, especially with regard to believers; he has taken death out of his power, and manages it himself; and thus *he delivers them who through fear of death were* held in a long and painful *bondage;* ver. 15.

It is in such views as these that the apostle says to the Corinthian believers, *all things are yours, things present, and things to come,* this world in the joys or sorrows of it, *life and death, all are yours, and ye are Christ's;* 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. You have an interest and a share in the possessions and the power of Christ over all things so far as may promote your happiness: Christ makes *all things*, even death itself, *work together for the good* of his people; *Rom.* viii. 28. By death he puts an end to the body of sin, and frees the soul from all those ruffling passions, those inquietudes of the blood, and disorders of nature; those strong and perverse appetites that cost the christian so much toil to

subdue, and brought him so often under guilt, darkness, and sorrow. By death he delivers the believer from the pains and infirmities of the body, the perpetual languishings of a weakly constitution, and the anguish of acute diseases. He constrains death to give the weary saint release from all the miseries of the present state, and to hide him from the fury of the oppressor. The grave is God's hiding place from the storms and tumults of the world; *there the weary are at rest, and the wicked cease from troubling:* and instead of consigning us over to the full malice of the devil, death is made a means to convey us away from all his assaults, and translate us into that country, where he has no power to enter. And when the soul is dismissed into the bosom of a reconciled God, by the ministry of death, the body is put to rest in the grave; the grave, which is sanctified into a bed of rest for all the followers of Christ, since their Lord and Master has lain there.

In the gospel of Christ, the name of death is altered into sleep. Christ, who has subdued it, seems to have given it this new name, that it might not have a frightful sound in the ears of his beloved. Though it was sometimes called sleep in the Old Testament, yet that chiefly regarded the silence, and darkness, and inactivity of that state; whereas in the New Testament, and in the xiith of Daniel, it is called sleep, to denote that there is an awaking-time. The ancient christians, upon this account, called the church-yard, where they buried the dead, κοιμητήριον, a sleeping-place. And though the grave may be termed the prison of death, yet death is not lord of the prison; he can detain the captives there but during the pleasure of Christ, for he who is *alive for evermore, has the keys of death and hell,* that is, of the separate state; *Rev.* i. 18. Now this is the true reason why christians have spoken so many kind things of death, which is the king of terrors to a natural man. They call it a release from pain and sin, a messenger of peace, the desired hour, and the happy moment. All this is spoken while they behold it with an eye of faith in the hands of Christ, who has subdued it to himself, and constrained it to serve the designs of his love to them.

3. When it has done all Christ's work, it shall be utterly destroyed. After the resurrection, there shall be no more dying. The saints shall rise immortal, and dwell in heaven for ever, in the complete enjoyment of all that is included in the name of LIFE. As the angel in prophecy lifts up his hand, *and swears by him that lives for ever and ever, that time shall be no longer;* Rev. x. 6. So Christ Jesus, the Lord of angels, shall, as it were, pronounce with a sovereign voice, that death shall be no more. He shall send the great archangel with the trumpet of God; it shall sound through the deepest caverns of the grave, and shall summon death from its inmost recesses. The tyrant shall hear and obey, and restore all his captives out of prison; *the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and live,* John v. 25, 28, 29. *They that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.* After this our Lord has no employment for death, his slave; the bodies of men shall die no more: There shall be no more any state of separation between the flesh and spirit; *Rev.* xx. 14. *And death and hell,* or Hades, *were cast into the lake of fire;* that is, there shall be no more death, no grave, no separate state of souls, all these shall be for ever destroyed.

I. We may infer from this third general head, the great power and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ; we may learn the honour that is due to him from mortals; it is he that hath subdued death, and that by his own dying. A wonderous method of victory! a

surprizing conquest! and he lives for ever to destroy it in his appointed time. How great and honourable must he be in the eyes of all mankind, who has vanquished so universal a conqueror? How desirable is his person, and how delightful the sound of his name to every believer! for he suppresses all their enemies and shall destroy them even to the last. How well does he fulfil the great engagement? *Hosea* xiii. 14. *I will ransom them from the power of the grave: I will redeem them from death; O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction; repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.* Let us salute him the Prince of life, *Acts* iii. 15. and adore him under that character. He dispossesses death of all its dominions. He approves himself a complete Saviour of all his saints, and a Redeemer of his captive friends.

II. We may learn also from this head of discourse, the power and excellency of the gospel of Christ, for it discovers to us how this great enemy is vanquished, and when it shall be destroyed; and thus it lays a foundation for courage at death, and gives us assurance of a joyful rising-day. Death being abolished by the mediation of *Christ, immortality and life are brought to light* by his gospel; 2 *Tim.* i. 10. That is, there is a brighter discovery of the future state, and of everlasting happiness, than ever before was given to the world.

Here, in the name of Christ, and of his gospel, we may give a challenge to all other religions, and say, which of them has borne up the spirit of man so high above the fears of death as this has done? or has given us so fair, so rational, and so divine an account how death has been overcome by one man, and how by faith in his name we may all be made overcomers? How vain are the trifles with which the heathen priests and their prophets amused the credulous multitude? What silly and insipid fables do they tell us of souls passing over in a ferry-boat to the other world, and describe the fields of pleasure, and the prisons of pain in that country of ghosts and shadows, in so ridiculous a manner, that the wise men of their own nations despised the romance, and few were stupid enough to believe it all. If we consult the religion of their philosophers, they give us but a poor, lame, and miserable account of the state after death. Some of them denied it utterly, and others rave at random in mere conjectures, and float in endless uncertainties. The courage which some of their heroes professed at the point of death, was rather a stubborn indolence, than a rational and well-founded valour; and not many arrived at this hardiness of mind, except those that supposed their existence ended with their life, and thought they should be dissolved into their first atoms. Aristotle, one of the greatest men amongst them, tells us that futurity is uncertain, and calls death the most terrible of all terribles.

If we search into the religion of the Jews, which was a scheme of God's own contrivance and revelation to men, we find the affairs of a future world lay much in the dark; their consciences were not so thoroughly purged from the guilt of sin, but that some terrors hung about them, as appears from *Heb.* x. 1, 2, 3. and having so faint and obscure notices of the separate state of souls, and of the resurrection, these were the persons, who in a special manner, *through the fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage;* Heb. ii. 15. But christianity lays a fair and rational foundation for our confidence and triumph in the dying hour. It shews how guilt is removed by an all-sufficient sacrifice; and makes it evident that no hell, no vengeance, no shadows of misery await the believer in that invisible world. This makes the christian venture into it with a certain boldness, and a becoming presence of mind. The doctrine of Christ

shews us how the sting of death is taken away, and calls us to fight with a vanquished enemy, a serpent without a sting; it gives us assurance that we shall rise again from the dust with bodies fresher and fairer, glorious in their frame, and their constitution immortal; for death shall be no more. Exalted by so sublime a hope, what is there in death sufficient to depress our spirits, if our faith were but equal to this admirable doctrine? The holy apostles are witnesses, the noble army of martyrs are witnesses, and many a saint in our day is a witness to this truth, and gives honour to this gospel. How many thousands have met death, and all its frightful attendants, with a steady soul, and a serene countenance, and have departed to heaven with songs of praise upon their lips, a smile upon their face, and triumph in their eyes? And this was not owing to any extravagant flights of enthusiasm, nor the fires of an enflamed fancy, but it has been performed often, and may be done daily by the force of a regular faith, on the most solid and reasonable principles, for such are the principles of the gospel of Christ.

SECTION IV.

BLESSINGS GAINED BY THE DESTRUCTION OF DEATH.

The fourth and last general head of discourse, is an enquiry into the advantages which the saints receive by the destruction of this last enemy. This is a large and endless field, for it includes a great part of the happiness of the final heaven. But I shall attempt to mention briefly a few of the benefits that attend my text, and that without a nice distinction of particulars.

When death is destroyed, we shall share in the joy and triumph of Christ for absolute conquest over all his enemies; for there is scarce any glory given to Christ, considered as man, but the saints are said to be humble partners in it, or at least to enjoy the resemblance. Is he appointed the Judge of all? It is promised also to the saints that they shall judge angels, and the twelve tribes of Israel. Do we suffer with him? we shall also reign with him. If we conquer death by faith, we shall rise and triumph. Here we labour and fight with many adversaries, and we think we have routed them, but they rally again, and give us fresh vexation, so that we hardly know how to attempt a song of victory on this side the grave. Besides, death still remains for our trial and conflict; but there we shall rejoice over all our enemies, subdued, destroyed, and abolished for ever.

Then God will be all in all to his saints. This is a consequent which St. Paul mentions in the verses where my text is: God will manage the affairs of his heavenly kingdom in a more immediate way than he has managed his kingdom on earth. Christ having destroyed all the enemies of his church, and presented it safe before the Father, has finished all those divine purposes for which the mediatorial kingdom was entrusted with him; then he shall resign his commission to the Father again; and the ever blessed God shall, in a more immediate and absolute manner, reign over all the creation. He shall more immediately impress devils and damned spirits with a sense of infinite wrath; and with a more immediate sense of his love and eternal favour, shall he for ever bless all the inhabitants of heaven. So much as this seems to be implied in the words of the apostle, 1 *Cor.* xv. 24, 25, &c. But it is impossible that in this state we should know either the full extent, or the just limitations of that promise, *God shall be all in all.* Our honoured

and departed friend had these words dwelling upon her heart; these were often in her lips in the days of her faith and hope, and in the hours of her passage through the dark valley: She enjoys part of the pleasure of them in her present heaven, and with pleasure she expects the more absolute accomplishment, when the resurrection shall complete the blessedness of all the saints.

Another consequent of the destruction of death, is the employment of all the powers of human nature in the service of God, and they shall be neither weak nor weary. For all the inconveniences that attend mortality shall be swallowed up and lost for ever.

Alas, how poor and imperfect is the service which our bodies yield to God in this world! How heavily do our souls complain of the clog of this flesh, and move onwards heavily in the discharge of duty! and in the grave the body is quite cut off from all service. But when death shall be dispossessed, when we shall arise from the dust, and put on bodies of glory, then with our whole natures, and with all their powers, we shall do honour to God our Creator, our Redeemer, and our King. The time will come when we *shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more,* and the refreshments of sleep shall be no more necessary to support life. When death shall be destroyed, sleep, the image and picture of death, shall be destroyed too. There shall be nothing that looks like death in all that vital world, that world of immortality. We shall *serve the Lord day and night in his temple;* that is continually, for there shall be *no night there;* Rev. vii. 15, 16. and xxi. 25. Then we shall taste all the true blessedness that human nature is capable of, and that without danger of excess or sin. When God first united these two pieces of his workmanship, the soul and body, and composed a man, he designed him the subject of various pleasures, wherein each part should have been subservient to the other, to render the felicity of the creature perfect. It is sin and death that have entered into our natures, and prevented this noble design in our present state; but the counsel of the Lord shall stand. And when he raises up the body from the grave, it shall leave all the seeds of death behind it. The faculties and the senses shall awake in all their original sprightliness and vigour, and our future heaven shall be furnished with objects suited to entertain those powers, and to convey intense pleasure to glorified minds without danger of satiety or weariness. When the time comes that *there shall be no more death, God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes;* there shall be no sorrow nor crying, *nor any more pain; for the former things are passed away,* and he that sits upon the throne shall say, *behold I make all things new;* Rev. xxi. 4, 5.

Then shall we enjoy the constant society of our best friends and dearest acquaintance; those that have arrived at the New Jerusalem themselves, and have assisted us in our travels thither. And we shall delightfully entertain and be entertained with the mutual narratives of divine grace, and the wise and holy methods of providence, whereby we have been conducted safe through all the fatigues and dangers of the wilderness to that heavenly country. And that which shall add an unknown relish to all the former blessings, is the full assurance that we shall possess them for ever; for every one of our enemies are then destroyed, and the last of them is death. Here on earth it is a perpetual pain to the mind to think that those whom we love are mortal; the next moment may divide them from us far as the distance of two worlds. They are seized on a sudden from our eyes, and from our embraces; and this thought allays the delight that we take in their company, and diminishes the joy; but in that world all our friends are immortal; *we shall ever be with the Lord,* and ever with one another too; 1 *Thess.* iv. 17.

May I be permitted here to make a short reflection on that mournful providence that has joined two lovely relatives in death,* and given occasion for the sad solemnities of this day? The pious mother led the way to heaven but a few days before the pious daughter followed, each of them the parent of a reputable family, and the descendants from a progenitor, † whose name is in honour among the churches. As mutual affection joined their habitations in life, so the care of surviving friends has laid them to rest in their beds of earth together. We trust they are also joined in the world of blessed spirits on high, and they shall be joined again in the world of glorified saints in the morning of the resurrection. Death, their common enemy, has taken them both captives together; has bound in his chains the mother and the daughter; but they are prisoners of hope, and together they shall obtain a glorious release.

I would copy a line from that most beautiful elegy of David, and apply it here with more justice than the psalmist could to Saul and Jonathan, 2 Sam. i. 23. *Lovely and pleasant were they in their lives, and in death they were not divided.* Silent were they, and retired from the world, and unknown except to their intimate friends; but God was a witness of their hours of divine retirement. The graces of christianity, and the virtues of domestic life, which are the proper ornaments of the sex, were the marks of their utmost aim and ambition; nor did they seek the flatteries of the court or the city, nor affect the gaities of a degenerate age. Humble they were, and averse from public shew and noise; nor will I disturb their graves by making them the subject of public praise. In the hearts of their families, their memory, their image, and their example will live. Oh may the brightest and best parts of their image and example live in the character and practice of all that are left behind!

What a dreadful and overwhelming thought is it to suppose, that any of that honoured and numerous household should be divided asunder at the last day! Give all diligence then, my worthy friends, to *make your calling and your election sure;* devote yourselves to the God of your predecessors; trust in the same Saviour; tread in the same paths of holiness; and pursue the same glory. What a joy will it be to that pious lady that is gone before, to find, that those that were dear to her as her own soul have overcome sin and death, and in a blessed succession arrive at the same heaven! Let me intreat you to give her this satisfaction, and not disappoint her prayers and her hopes. Let your venerable surviving parent, who is now confined at home under sorrows and sharp pains, obtain this pleasure. Let that dear partner of her joys and cares behold the power of religion appearing and reigning in all your hearts before his eyes are closed in death. Give both of them this consolation at the appearance of Christ, that they may say, "*Lord, here we are, and the children that thou hast given us.* Here we are with our ancestors, and our offspring, and our kindred around us, adoring thy rich grace together, and entering together into the state of perfect glory which thou hast prepared."

It remains only that I should propose some reflections on the last head of discourse for the meditation of this whole assembly, and especially for those that are engaged in the spiritual warfare, and proceed to daily conquests.

Shall death, with all its attendants, be destroyed for ever? And are these the blessings

* The lady Hartopp, daughter of Charles Fleetwood, Esq. and wife to Sir John Hartopp, of Newington, Baronet, died November 9, 1711. Mrs. Gould, their daughter, and wife to Mr. Gould, now Sir Nathaniel Gould, of Newington, died six days after, *viz.* November 15, and left their households behind them oppressed with double sorrows.

† Charles Fleetwood, Esq. of Norfolk.

that shall succeed? Then enter into this joy beforehand by a lively faith, and begin the song of triumph—*O death, where is thy sting, O grave, where is thy victory?* 1 Cor. xv. 55. *Rejoice not over me, O mine enemy, when I fall I shall arise;* Mic. vii. 8.

After you have fought many battles with Satan, subdued many sins, and encountered a thousand temptations with success, perhaps you find new adversaries still arising; look forward then to this joyful hour, and say, "But I shall one day be for ever free from all these toils and labours of war, for all my enemies shall be overcome, since death, the last of them, shall be subdued." When you feel the infirmities of this mortal body hang heavy upon your spirits, and damp your devotion, read the words of this promise, and rejoice, "These pains and these languors of nature shall one day vanish and be no more; for death, with all its train, must be destroyed."

When some of your dearest friends are seized by this tyrant, and led away to the grave in his chains, while you are wounded to the very soul, remember that Christ, your Captain and your Saviour, shall revenge this quarrel upon your last enemy; for he has appointed the hour of his destruction. Mourn not, therefore, for the dead, as *those that sorrow without hope, for those that sleep in Jesus, the Lord shall bring with him* when he comes; 1 *Thess.* iv. 13. And he shall join you together in a blessed and durable friendship, where it shall be eternally impossible for enemies to break in upon your peace; for death, the last of them, shall be then destroyed. And the Lord has left us this comfort in the end of his sacred writings, *Surely I come quickly.* Let each of us with a cheerful heart reply, *even so, come, Lord Jesus.* Amen.

DISCOURSE II.

THE HAPPINESS OF SEPARATE SPIRITS, &c.

Attempted in a Funeral Discourse in Memory of Sir John Hartopp, Bart. deceased.

THE INTRODUCTION.

IT is a solemn and mournful occasion that has brought me to this place this day.* Divine Providence, and the will of surviving relatives, call me to pay the last sacred and pious respect to the memory of the deceased, a worthy gentleman, and an excellent christian, who has lately left our world in a good old age.

It is something more than ten years since I was engaged in the same service to the memory of his honoured and pious lady, when, by a double and painful stroke, the mother and the daughter were joined in death; when the two kindred families were smitten in the tenderest part, and each of them sustained a loss that could never be repaired.†

This town was the place which they had all honoured with their habitation, and spent the largest part of their lives amongst you; but they are now become inhabitants of the heavenly city, they dwell in the world of blessed spirits, and I would lead your devoutest thoughts to follow them thither. Come then, let our meditations take their rise from those words of the great apostle, in

HEB. xii. 23.

THE SPIRITS OF JUST MEN MADE PERFECT.

IT is a much sweeter employment to trace the souls of our departed friends into those upper and brighter regions, than to be ever dwelling upon the dark prospect, and fixing our eyes upon death, and dust, and the grave; and that not only because it gives us a comfortable view of the persons whom we mourn, and thus it relieves our most weighty and smarting sorrows, but because it leads us to consider our own best interest, and our highest hopes, and puts us in mind of the communion that we have with those blessed spirits in heaven, while we belong to the church on earth. *We are come*, says the apostle, verse 22. We, in the gospel state, are come *to mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, to the innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.* What sort of communion it is that good men here below maintain with those exalted spirits, is not my present business to describe; therefore I apply myself immediately to the words of my text, and confine myself to them only.

* Sir John Hartopp died April 1, 1722, in the 85th year of his age; and the substance of this discourse was delivered briefly at Stoke Newington, April 15, following.

† See a particular account, page 21 of the foregoing discourse in the margin.

And here I shall consider these four things:

I. Who are particularly designed by *the spirits of the just;* and here I shall make it evident the apostle intends not merely the spirits of good men, but such good spirits as are dismissed from their mortal bodies.

II. We shall enquire wherein consists the perfection to which they have arrived, and what are the excellencies in which they are made perfect.

III. What sort of perfection it is they enjoy, and what are the peculiar characters of it.

IV. How they arrive at this perfect state, and what influence the dismission from their bodies has towards their attainment of it.

And then conclude with a few remarks for our instruction and practice, suitable to the present providence.

SECTION I.

OF THE SPIRITS OF THE JUST.

Our first inquiry is, whom are we to understand by the spirits of the just here spoken of?

The name of just or righteous men, taken in a large and general sense, as it is often used in scripture, signifies all those who fear and love God, and are accepted of him. In the New Testament they are frequently called saints, believers, or children of God: but in both parts of the Bible they are often described by the name of just or righteous, and they are properly called so upon these three accounts:

I. Their persons are made righteous in the sight of God, having their sins forgiven, and their souls justified through the death and righteousness of Jesus Christ. So the word is used, Rom. v. 19. *By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.* They have seen themselves all guilty and exposed to the wrath of God, *they have fled to lay hold on the hope set before them,* they have mourned before God, and been weary of sin, they have received the great atonement, they have committed their case by a living faith to Jesus the righteous, the surety and the Saviour of perishing sinners; and that God hath received them into his favour, and has imputed righteousness to them, even that God who is *just, and the justifier of them that believe in Jesus.* Now this sense cannot reasonably be excluded from the character of a saint, though the word righteous is more frequently taken in the following senses.

II. Their natures are made righteous, and sanctified by the Spirit of grace. They have a principle of grace and holiness wrought in them; so the word signifies, Eph. iv. 24. *The new man, which is created after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness.* They were once sinners, disobedient and unholy, as they were born into this world; but they are born again, and made new creatures by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Their understandings are enlightened to see the dreadful evil of sin, and a divine beauty of holiness. Their wills are turned from folly and vanity, from the love of earth, and sense, and sin, to a holy contempt of the world, and a hatred of all that is sinful; from a neglect of religion to desires after God, and a delight in him; from a mere formal profession of the gospel, to the faith and love of Christ, and a zealous pursuit of holiness; and they place their highest hopes and their joys in things divine, spiritual, and eternal.

III. Their lives are righteous, and conformable to the will of God revealed in his word. So the term righteous signifies, 1 John iii. 7. *He that doeth righteousness is*

righteous. The just man makes it the business of his life to do works of righteousness, taken in the largest sense; to worship God, to seek his glory, to obey his will, which is the rule of righteousness; to do him all the service on earth that his station and circumstances admit of, and to deal faithfully and justly among men, and to do them all the good that lies in his power.

These are the just men whose spirits are spoken of in my text.

Now it is evident the apostle here means their spirits which are in heaven, and departed from these mortal bodies, because the train of blessed companions, which he describes just before, leads our thoughts to the invisible world.

If we can suppose any part of these two verses to refer to earth and our present state, it must be when he says, *ye are come to mount Zion, to the city of the living God,* that is, to the visible church of Christ under the gospel dispensation. But then he adds, you are come also to the *heavenly Jerusalem,* which may probably include all the inhabitants of heaven in general; and descending to particulars, he adds, *to an innumerable company of angels, and to the general assembly and church of the first-born, who are written in heaven:* whereby we must understand the whole invisible church of God among men, if we do not confine it to those who are already of the church triumphant. And next he leads us *to God, the Judge of all,* and *to spirits of just men made perfect;* that is, spirits released from flesh and blood, who have stood before God their Judge, and are determined to a state of perfection in heaven.

Besides, when St. Paul speaks of fellow-christians here on earth, it is not his manner to call them spirits, but men, or brethren, or saints, &c.; therefore, by the naked and single term spirits, he distinguishes these persons from those who dwell in mortal bodies, and raises our thoughts to the world of blessed souls, released from the wretched ties and bondage of flesh and blood, the spirits of good men departed from this earth, and dwelling in the better regions of heaven.

I would here take notice also, that the apostle perhaps in this place chooses rather to call them just or righteous men, which is a term used frequently both in the Old and New Testament, that he might include the patriarchs and the jewish saints as well as the souls of departed christians. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Noah, Daniel, and David, Job, Moses, and Elijah, dwell in that happy world, with a thousand other spirits of renown in the ancient church, as well as the spirits of those that have seen the Messiah, and believed in Jesus of Nazareth. What a noble and wonderous assembly! What an amazing and blissful society of human souls, gathered from various nations, and from all ages, and joined together in the heavenly Jerusalem, the family of God above!

I shall proceed now to the *second* thing I proposed.

SECTION II.

OF THEIR PERFECTION IN KNOWLEDGE, HOLINESS, AND JOY.

The second enquiry is this, wherein consists the perfection at which these spirits are arrived?

The word perfect cannot be taken here in its most extensive, absolute, and sublime sense, for in that sense it can belong only to God; he is and must be the sum and centre

of all perfection for ever: All excellency and all blessedness in a supreme degree meet in him; none besides him can pretend to absolute perfection. Nor is the word used here in its most sublime sense, in which it may be applied to a creature; for when the spirits of just men are made never so perfect, the blessed soul of our Lord Jesus Christ will be more perfect than they; for *in all things he* must *have the pre-eminence;* Col. i. 18.

Perfection, therefore, is taken in a comparative sense here, as in many other places of scripture. So St. Paul calls those christians on earth perfect, who are advanced in knowledge and christianity far above their fellows; as in 1 *Cor.* ii. 6. *I speak wisdom among them that are perfect.* Phil. iii. 15. *Let as many as are perfect be thus minded.* So that blessed souls above are only perfect in a comparative sense. They are advanced in every excellency of nature, and every divine privilege, far above all their fellow-saints here on earth.

I desire it also to be observed here, that the word perfection doth not generally imply another sort of character than what a man possessed before, but a far more exalted degree of the same character which he was before possessed of. The perfection then of the spirits of the just in heaven, is a glorious and transcendant degree of those spiritual and heavenly qualifications and blessings which they enjoyed here on earth in a lower measure; implying also a freedom from all the defects and disorders to which they were here exposed, and which are inconsistent with their present felicity.

If I were to branch it into particulars, I would name but these three, *viz.* 1. A great increase of knowledge, without the mixtnre of error. 2. A glorious degree of holiness, without the mixture of the least sin. 3. Constant peace and joy, without the mixture of any sorrow or uneasiness.

Let us consider them distinctly.

1. A great increase of knowledge, without the mixture of error; and in this sense it is perfect knowledge.

Part of the happiness of spirits consists in contemplation; and the more excellent the object is which we contemplate, and the more perfect our acqnaintance with it, the greater is our happiness. Therefore the knowledge of God, the infinite and eternal Spirit, is the true felicity of all the ranks of created spirits in the upper and lower worlds. What unknown and unrivalled beauties are contained in the attributes of his nature! What a heavenly pleasure is it to lose ourselves amongst the boundless perfections of his self-sufficiency and eternal existence, his wisdom, his power, his justice, his holiness, his goodness, and his truth! And what a divine harmony amongst them all!

How does the philosopher entertain and feast himself with daily discoveries of new wonders amongst the works of God, and beholds the print of the hands of his Creator on them all! What superior glories are seen by the inquiring christian amongst the greater wonders of his grace! and he receives the discovery of them with superior delight, for his eternal life is in them. John xvii. 3. *This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* To know the Father and the Son, according to the revelation which they have given of themselves in the gospel, is not only the way to obtain life eternal, and consequently the business of the saints below, but the knowledge of this Son and this Father in their natural glories, in their personal characters, in their sublime and mysterious relations to each other, and in their most amazing contrivances and transactions for the recovery of lost sinners, may be matter of the most pleasing enquiry and delicious contemplation to the angels themselves, 1 *Pet.* i. 12.

These are the *things which the angels desire to look into.* And *the spirits of the just made perfect* are employed in the same delightful work, for which they have much more concern, and a dearer interest in it. We know something of God by the light of nature. The reason that is within each of us shines like a slender candle in a private room, and gives us some twinkling and uncertain notions of our Creator. The notices that we obtain by the light of grace, or the gospel here on earth, are far brighter and surer, like the moon at midnight shining upon a dark world, or like the rise of the morning star, and the dawning of the day. But the knowledge which departed spirits obtain of their Creator and their Redeemer in the light of glory, is as far superior to that of nature and grace, as the lustre of the meridian sun exceeds the pale moon-beams, or the glimmering twilight of the morning.

This is what the apostle describes, 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10, 11, 12. *For we know but in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face: Now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known.* The imperfection of our knowledge in this world consists much in this, that we are liable to perpetual mistakes. A thousand errors stand thick around us in our enquiries after truth, and we stumble upon error often in our wisest pursuits of knowledge; *for we see but through a glass darkly, but then we shall know even as we are known, and see face to face;* that is, we shall have a more immediate and intuitive view of God and Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, without such mediums as are now necessary for our instruction. We shall know them in a manner something akin to the way whereby God knows us, though not in the same degree of perfection, for that is impossible. Yet in these respects our knowledge shall bear some resemblance to the knowledge of God himself, *viz.* that it shall be not merely a rational knowledge, by inferences drawn from his works, not merely a knowledge by narration, or report and testimony, such as we now enjoy by his word, but it shall be such a sort of knowledge as we have of a man when we see his face, and it shall also be a certain and unwavering knowledge, without remaining doubts, without error or mistake. O happy spirits, that are thus divinely employed, and are entertaining themselves and their fellow-spirits with those noble truths and transporting wonders of nature and grace of God and Christ, and things heavenly, which are all mystery, entanglement, and confusion to our thoughts in the present state!

II. This perfection consists in a glorious degree of holiness, without the mixture of the least sin; and in this sense it is perfect holiness.

All holiness is contained and summed up in the love and delightful service of God and our fellow-creatures.

When we attempt to love God here on earth, and by the alluring discoveries of grace try to raise our affections to things of heaven, what sinful damps and coldness hang heavy upon us? What counter-allurements do we find towards sin and the creature, by the mischievous influences of the flesh and this world? What an estrangedness from God do the best of christians complain of? And when they get nearest to their Saviour in the exercises of holy love, they find perpetual reason to mourn over their distance, and they cry out often with pain at their hearts, "What a cursed enemy abides still in me, and divides me from the dearest object of my desire and joy!" But *the spirits of the just made*

perfect have the nearest views of God their Father and their Saviour; and as they see them face to face, so, may I venture to express it, they love them with a union of heart to heart; for *he that is joined to the Lord* in the nearest union in heaven, may well be called *one spirit with him*, since the apostle says the same thing of the saints on earth, 1 *Cor.* vi. 17.

As our love of God is imperfect here, so is all our devotion and worship.

While we are in this world, sin mingles with all our religious duties: We come before God with our prayers and our songs, but our thoughts wander from him in the midst of worship, and we are gone on a sudden to the ends of the earth. We go up to his temple, and we try to serve him there an hour or two; then we return to the world, and we almost forget the delights of the sanctuary, and the God we have seen there. But *the spirits of the just made perfect are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple;* Rev. vii. 15. And though they may not be literally engaged in one everlasting act of worship, yet they are ever busy in some glorious services for him. If they should be sent on any message to other worlds, yet they never wander from the sight of their God: For if the guardian angels of children *always behold the face of our heavenly Father*, Matt. xviii. 10. even when they are employed in their divine errands to our world, much more may we suppose the spirits of just men made perfect never lose the blissful vision, whatsoever their employments shall or can be.

And as our acts of worship on earth and converse with God are very imperfect, so is our zeal and activity for God extremely defective; but it shall be ever bright and burning in the upper world.

When we would exert our zeal for God on earth, how many corrupt affections mix with that zeal and spoil it! *Dead flies, that cause* that noble *ointment to send forth a stinking savour?* How much of self, and pride, and vain ambition too often mingle with our desires to serve Christ and his gospel! Some have preached Christ out of *vain glory*, or envy; and a mixture of those vices may taint our pious ministrations. When we seem *to drive furiously*, like Jehu to the destruction of the priests and the worship of Baal, too often the wildfire of our lusts and passions, our envy and wrath, and secret revenge join together to animate our chariot-wheels. When we are ready to say with him, *come, and see my zeal for the Lord*, perhaps God espies in our hearts too much of the same carnal mixture; for Jehu exalted the true God, that he might establish himself a king; 2 *Kings* x. 16. But the spirits of the just are perfect in zeal, and pure from all mixtures. Their very natures are like the angels; they are so many flames of sacred and unpolluted fire, *the ministers of God that do his pleasure*, and then hide their faces behind their wings; when they have done all for God, they fall down and confess they are nothing.

Temptation and sin have no place in those happy regions. These are the evils that belong to earth and hell; but within the gates of heaven nothing must enter that tempteth, *nothing that defileth;* Rev. xxi. 27. It is the mixture of sinful thoughts and idle words, sinful actions and irregular affections, that makes our state of holiness so imperfect here below. *We groan within ourselves, being burdened;* we would be rid of these criminal weaknesses, these guilty attendants of our lives: But the spirits above are under a sweet necessity of being for ever holy; their natures have put on perfection; the image of God is so far completed in them, that nothing contrary to the divine nature remains in all their frame, for they see God in all the fairest beauties of his holiness, and they adore and love. They behold him without a veil, and are *changed into the same image, from glory to*

glory; 2 Cor. iii. 18. If these words are applicable to the state of grace, much more to that of glory. They see Christ as he is, and they are made completely like him, 1 *John* iii. 2. which is true concerning the state of separate spirits, as well as the hour of resurrection.

As their love to God is perfect, so is their love to all their fellow-saints.

We try to love our fellow-creatures and fellow-christians here on earth; but we have so many corrupt passions of our own, and so many infirmities and imperfections belong to our neighbours also, that mutual love is very imperfect. *Love is the fulfilling of the law;* Rom. xiii. 10. But we shall never fulfil that law perfectly till we are joined to the spirits of the just in glory, where there is no inhabitant without the flame of sacred love, no single spirit unlovely or unbeloved.

In those happy mansions there is no envy raised by the perfections or the honours of our neighbour spirits; no detracting thought is known there, no reproachful word is heard in that country; and perhaps no word of reproach is to be found in the whole heavenly language. Malice and slander, and the very names of infamy, are unknown in those regions; and wrath and strife are eternal strangers. No divided opinions, no party quarrels, no seeds of discord are sown in heaven. Our little angry jars and contentions have no place there, and the noise of war and controversy ceases for ever. There are no offences given, and none are taken in that world of love. Neither injury nor resentment is ever known or practised there, those bitter and fatal springs of revenge and blood. Universal benevolence runs through the whole kingdom; each spirit wishes well to his neighbour as to himself; and till we arrive there, we shall never be made perfect in love, nor shall we see the blessed characters of it described in the scriptures fully copied out in living examples.

In that holy world dwells God himself, who is original love; there resides our Lord Jesus Christ, who is love incarnate; and from that sacred head flows an eternal stream of love through every member, and blesseth all the inhabitants of that land with its divine refreshments. Holiness is perfect among the spirits of the just, because love is perfect there.

Objection. But are there not several graces and virtues that belong to the saints on earth that are finished at death, and can have no room in heaven? How then can perfection of holiness in heaven consist in an increase of the same graces we practised on earth?

Answer. Yes; there are several such virtues and such graces as faith and repentance, and godly sorrow, patience and forbearance, love to enemies, and forgiveness of injuries, &c. But all these arise from the very imperfection of our present state, from the sins or follies of ourselves or our fellow-creatures. Faith arises from the want of sight; repentance from the returns of guilt; godly sorrow from the workings of sin in us. Patience owes its very nature and exercise to the afflictions we sustain from the hand of God; and forbearance and forgiveness respects the injuries that we receive from our fellow-creatures. But in heaven faith, so far as it regards the absence of God and Christ, is lost in sight and enjoyment, as the light of a glimmering taper is lost in the blaze of sunbeams. Repentance of old sins, so far as it is attended with any painful or shameful passions, ceases for ever in heaven, and there is no new guilt for us to repent of; there shall be no evil working in us to give pain to the spirit; no affliction from God to demand a patient submission; no injuries from men to be borne or forgiven.

But there is the same pious temper still continues in the spirits of the just made perfect, which was the spring of those graces on earth; and could the objects or occasions of them return, every spirit there would exercise the same grace, and that in a more glorious and perfect manner, for their very natures are all over holy.

III. The last thing I shall mention, wherein the perfection of the saints above consists, is, their constant peace and exalted joy, without any mixture of sorrow or uneasiness; and this is joy and peace in perfection.

If our knowledge, our love, and our holiness are imperfect on earth, our joys must be so. The mistakes and the follies to which we are liable here below, the guilt that pains the conscience, and the sin that is restless and ever working within us, will *bring forth fruits of present sorrow*, where they do not produce the fruit of eternal death. A saint in this world will groan under these burdens; and it is divinely natural for him to cry out, *O wretched man! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* Rom. vii. 24.

Thus there are many things that are within us, and that belong to us in this world, that forbid the perfection of our joys. And besides all these, we are attached and tied down to many other uneasinesses while we dwell on earth.

This world is a fair theatre of the wisdom and power of God, but it is hung round and replenished with temptations to fallen man, proper for a state of trial; soft and flattering temptations, that by the senses are ever drawing away the soul from God and heaven, and breaking in upon its divine repose and joy; and while we are surrounded with a thousand dangers, we cannot be said to dwell *in perfect peace.* The follies and the crimes of others afflict the soul of a good man, and put him to pain, *as the righteous soul of Lot was vexed in Sodom from day to day with their unlawful deeds;* 2 Pet. ii. 8. The greater vexations, and the little teazing accidents of life that attend us, disturb the sacred rest of the saint, and ruffle or wound his spirit. And the best of men on this account are sometimes ready to cry out with David, Psalm cxx. 5, 6. *Wo is me that I sojourn in* Meshech, *and dwell in the tents of* Kedar: *My soul hath long dwelt with them that hate peace. O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away, and be at rest;* Psalm lv. 6.

And sometimes God himself is absent from the soul that longs after him; *he hides his face, and then who can behold it?* We are smitten with a sense of sin, and the conscience is restless. We wander from thing to thing in much confusion of spirit; we go from providences to ordinances, from one word in the Bible to another, from self-examination and inward guilt to the blood of Christ, and the mercy of the Father; and it may be outward sorrows fall on us at the same time, guilt and judgment attend us at once: The deep of affliction calls to the deep of sin at the noise of the floods of divine anger, *Psalm* xlii. 7. We are kept in the dark for a season, and we see not the light of his countenance, nor know our own interest in his love. *We go forward,* as Job did, *but he is not there; and backward, but we cannot perceive him,* &c. All the comfort that a good man hath at such a season is to appeal to God *that he knoweth the way that I take; when he hath tried me,* I humbly hope *I shall come forth as gold;* Job xxiii. 8, 9, 10.

But *the spirits of the just made perfect* are in peaceful and joyous circumstances. They know God, for they see his face; they know that they love him, for they feel and enjoy it as the warmest and sweetest affection of their hearts; and they are sure God loves them too, for every moment they taste his love, and live upon it in all the rich varieties of its manifestation.

Oh! what unknown and endless satisfactions of mind arise from the full assurance of

the love of God! What tongue can express, or what heart can conceive the sacred pleasure that fills every soul in heaven under the immediate impressions of divine love! When the poor trembling doubting believer, that knew himself to be infinitely unworthy of the favour of God, or of the meanest place in his house, shall be acknowledged as a son in the midst of his Father's court on high, and amongst millions of congratulating angels!

No cloud shall ever interpose, no melancholy gloom, no shadow of darkness shall ever arise in those regions; for the countenance of God, like the sun in its highest strength, shall shine and smile upon them for ever. And through the length of all their immortality, there shall not be the least interruption of the sweet intercourse of love on God's side or on theirs.

In that world there is no sorrow, for there is no sin; *the inhabitants* of that city, of the heavenly Jerusalem, *shall never say I am sick; for the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity;* Isaiah xxxiii. 24. When the righteous are dismissed from this flesh *they enter into peace*, their bodies *rest in their beds* of earth, and their spirits *walk* in heaven, *each one in his* own *uprightness;* Isaiah lvii. 2. And as there is no sin within them to render them uneasy, so there is no troublesome guest, no evil attendant without them, that can give them fear or pain; no sinners to vex them, no tempter to deceive them, no spirit of hell to devour or destroy; Isaiah xxxv. 9, 10. *No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*

God himself shall never be absent, and then they cannot be unhappy. They *behold his face in righteousness*, and they are *satisfied when they awake with his likeness;* Psalm xvii. 15. When they leave this world of dreams and shadows, and awake into that bright world of spirits, they behold the face of God, and are made like him, as well as when their bodies shall awake out of the dust of death in the morning of the resurrection, formed in the image of the blessed Jesus. That glorious scripture, in *Rev.* xxi. 3, 4. be the sense of it what it will, can never be fulfilled in more glory on earth than belongs to the state of heaven. *The tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.*

The saints above see their blessed Lord and Saviour in all his exalted glories, and they are with him where he is, according to his own prayer, and his own promise, John xvii. 24. and xiv. 3. *They are absent from the body, and present with the Lord.* They have esteemed him on earth above all things, and longed after the sight of his face, *whom having not seen they loved*; 1 Pet. i. 8. but now they behold him, the dear Redeemer that gave his life and blood for them, they *rejoice with joy* much more *unspeakable, and full of superior glory.*

Thus have I shewn wherein this perfection of spirits in heaven consists. It is a high and glorious degree of all those excellencies and privileges they were blessed with on earth, without any mixture of the contrary evil. It is a perfection of knowledge, holiness and joy.

And canst thou hear of all this glory, O my soul, and meditate of all this joy, and yet cleave to earth and the dust still? Hast thou not often mourned over thy ignorance, and felt a sensible pain in the narrowness, the darkness, and the confusion of thy ideas,

after the utmost stretch and labour of thought? How little dost thou know of the essence of God, even thy God, and how little of the two united natures of Jesus, thy beloved Saviour? How small and scanty is thy knowledge of thyself, and of all thy fellow-spirits, while thou art here imprisoned in a cottage of clay? And art thou willing to abide in this dark prison still, with all thy follies and mistakes about thee? Does not the land of light above invite thy longing, and awaken thy desires; those bright regions where knowledge is made perfect, and where thy God and thy Redeemer are seen without a veil. And is not the perfect holiness of heaven another allurement to thee, O my soul? Dost thou not stretch thy wings for flight at the very mention of a world without temptation and without sin? How often hast thou groaned here under the burden of thy guilt, and the body of death? How hard hast thou wrestled with thy inbred iniquities? An hourly war, and a long toilsome conflict! How hast thou mourned in secret, and complained to thy God of these wrestless inward enemies of thy peace? And art thou so backward still to enter into those peaceful regions, where these enemies can never come, and where battle and war are known no more, but perfect and everlasting holiness adorns the inhabitants, and crowns of victory and triumph.

Oh the shattered and imperfect devotion of the best saints on earth! Oh the feeble fluttering efforts of praise! What poor hallelujahs we send up to heaven on notes of discord, and, as it were, on broken strings? Art thou not willing, O my soul, to honour thy God and thy Saviour with sweeter harmony? And yet what a reluctance dost thou shew to enter into that world of joy and praise, because the dark shadow of death hangs over the passage? Come, awake, arise, shake off thy fears; and let the sense and notice of what the spirits of the just above enjoy, raise thy courage, and excite thee to meet the first summons with sacred delight and rapture.

But I fear I have dwelt too long upon these three last particulars, because they are matters of more obvious notice, and more frequent discourse; yet they are so entertaining, that I knew not how to leave them. But I would not spend all my time on common topics, while I am paying honour to the memory of an uncommon christian.

I proceed therefore to the next general head.

SECTION III.

OF THE VARIOUS KINDS AND DEGREES OF THE EMPLOYMENTS AND PLEASURES OF HEAVEN.

Having shewn that by the *spirits of just men* in my text we are to understand the souls of all the pious and the good that have left the body; and having described their perfection as a state of complete knowledge, holiness and joy; the third thing I am to consider is, what sort of perfection this is, or what are some of the special characters of it. And here I beg your attention to some pleasing speculations which are agreeable to the word of God, and to the nature and reason of things, and which have often given my thoughts a sacred entertainment.

I. It is such a perfection as admits of great variety of employments and pleasures, according to the various turn and genius of each particular spirit. For the word perfection does not necessarily imply a state of universal and constant uniformity.

That the mind of every man here on earth has a different turn of genius, and peculiar manner of thought, is evident to every wise observer. And why should not every pious

mind or spirit carry to heaven with it so much of that turn and manner as is natural and innocent? I grant it is a possible thing, that many different geniuses of men on earth may perhaps be accounted for by the different constitution of the body, the frame of the brain, and the various texture of the nerves, or may be ascribed to the coarser or finer blood, and corporeal spirits, as well as to different forms of education and custom, &c. These may be able to produce a wonderous variety in the tempers and turns of inclination, even though all souls were originally the same: But I dare not assert that there is no difference betwixt the souls themselves, at their first creation and union with the body. There are some considerations would lead one to believe, that there are real diversities of genius among the spirits themselves in their own nature.

God, the great Creator, hath seemed to delight himself in a rich variety of productions in all his worlds which we are acquainted with. Let us make a pause here, and stand still and survey the overflowing riches of his wisdom, which are laid out on this little spot of his vast dominions, this earthly globe on which we tread; and we may imagine the same variety and riches overspreading all those upper worlds which we call planets or stars.

What an amazing multiplicity of kinds of creatures dwell on this earth? If we search the animated world and survey it, we shall find there are some that fly, some that creep or slide, and some walk on feet or run; and every sort of animals clothed with a proper covering, some of them more gay and magnificent in their attire than Solomon in all his glory; and each of them furnished with limbs, powers, and properties fitted for their own support, convenience and safety. How various are the kinds of birds and beasts that pass daily before our eyes. The fields and the woods, the forests and the deserts, have their different inhabitants. The savage and the domestic animals how numerous they are! and the fowl both wild and tame! What riches of dress and drapery are provided to clothe them in all their proper habits of nature? What an infinite number of painted insects fill the air, and overspread the ground? What bright spangles adorn their little bodies and their wings when they appear in their summer livery? What interwoven streaks of scarlet beauty mingled with green and gold? We behold a strange profusion of divine wisdom yearly in our own climate in these little animated crumbs of clay, as well as in the animals of larger size. And yet there are multitudes of new strange creatures that we read of in the narratives of foreign countries; and what a vast profusion of entertainments for them all? How are the mountains and meadows adorned with a surprising plenty of grass and herbs, fruits and flowers, almost infinite, for the use of man and meaner animals?

In the world of waters a thousand unknown creatures swim and sport themselves, and leap with excess of life even in the freezing seas. Millions of inhabitants range through that liquid wilderness with swiftest motion, and in the wonders of their frame and nature proclaim the skill of an Almighty Maker. Others of the watery kind are but half alive, and are tossed from place to place by the heaving ocean. Think of the leviathan, the eel, and the oyster, and tell me if God has not shewn a rich variety of contrivance in them: And as various as their nature is, so various is the means of their life; proper beds of lodging are provided for them, and variety of food suited to uphold every nature.

Mankind is a world of itself, made up of the mingled or united natures of flesh and spirit. What an infinite difference of faces and features among the sons and daughters of men? And how much more various are the turns of their appetites, tempers, and

inclinations, their humours and passions? And what glorious employment hath divine wisdom ordained for itself, in framing these millions of creatures with understandings and wills of so inconceivable a variety, so vast a difference of genius and inclination, to be the subjects of its providential government? And what a surprising harmony is there in the immense and incomprehensible scheme of divine counsels, arising from the various stations and businesses of men so infinitely diversified and distinct from one another, and centring in one great end, the divine glory? An amazing contrivance, and a design worthy of God.

Now is the pure intellectual world alone destitute of this delightful variety? Is the nature of spirits utterly incapable of this diversity and beauty, without the aids of flesh and blood? Hath the wisdom of God displayed no riches of contrivance there? And must there be such a dull uniformity no where but in the country where spirits dwell, spirits the noblest parts of God's creation and dominion? Has he poured out all the various glories of divine art and workmanship in the inanimate and brutal or animal world, and left the higher sort of creatures all of one genius, and one turn and mould, to replenish all the intellectual regions? Surely it is hard to believe it.

In the world of angels we find various kinds and orders. St. Paul tells us of *thrones*, and *dominions*, and *principalities;* Col. i. 16. and St. Peter speaks of *angels*, and *authorities*, and *powers;* 1 Pet. iii. 22. and in other parts of the word of God we read the names of an *archangel, a seraph, and a cherub.* And no doubt, as their degrees and stations in the heavenly world differ from each other, so their talents and genius to sustain those different stations are very various, and exactly suited to their charge and business. And it is no improbable thought, that the souls of men differ from each other as much as angels.

But if there were no difference at first betwixt the turn and genius of different spirits in their original formation, yet this we are sure of, that God designed their habitation in flesh and blood, and their passage through this world as the means to form and fit them for various stations in the unknown world of spirits. The souls of men having dwelt many years in particular bodies, have been influenced and habituated to particular turns of thought, both according to the various constitutions of those bodies, and the more various studies and businesses, and occurrences of life. Surely then we may with reason suppose the spirits departing from flesh to carry with them some bent and inclination towards various pleasures and employments. So we may reasonably imagine each sinful spirit that leaves the body, to be more abundantly inflamed with these particular vices which it indulged here, whether ambition, or pride, or covetousness, or malice, or envy, or aversion to God, and to all goodness; and their various sorts of punishments may arise from their own variety of lusts, giving each of them a peculiar inward torment. And why may not the spirits of the just made perfect have the same variety of taste and pleasure in that happy world above, according as they are fitted for various kinds of sacred entertainments in their state of preparation, and during their residence in flesh and blood? *He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God;* 2 Cor. v. 5.

In the world of human spirits made perfect, David and Moses dwell: Both of them were trained up in feeding the flocks of their fathers in the wilderness, to feed and to rule the nation of Israel, the chosen flock of God. And may we not suppose them also trained up in the arts of holy government on earth, to be the chiefs of some blessed army, some sacred tribe in heaven? They were directors of the forms of worship in the church below under divine inspiration: And might not that fit them to become leaders of some

celestial assembly, when a multitude of the sons of God above come at stated seasons to present themselves before the throne? Both of them knew how to celebrate the praise of their Creator in sacred melody; but David was the chief of mortals in this harmonious work: And may we not imagine that he is or shall be a master of heavenly music, before or after the resurrection, and teach some of the choirs above to tune their harps to *the Lamb that was slain?*

But to come down to more modern times, is there not a Boyle, (*a*) and a Ray, (*b*) in heaven? Pious souls who were trained up in sanctified philosophy; and surely they are fitted beyond their fellow-saints, to contemplate the wisdom of God in the works of his hands. Is there not a More, (*c*) and a Howe, (*d*) that have exercised their minds in an uncommon acquaintance with the world of spirits? And doubtless their thoughts are refined and improved in the upper world, and yet still engaged in the same pursuit. There is also a Goodwin, (*e*) and an Owen, (*f*) who have laid out the vigour of their enquiries in the glories and wonders of the person of Christ, his bloody sacrifice, his dying love, and his exalted station at the right-hand of God. The first of these, with a penetrating genius, traced out many a new and uncommon thought, and made rich discoveries by digging in the mines of scripture. The latter of them humbly pursued and confirmed divine truth; and both of them were eminent in promoting faith and piety, spiritual peace and joy, upon the principles of grace and the gospel. Their labours in some of these subjects, no doubt, have prepared them for some correspondent peculiarities in the state of glory. For though the doctrines of the person, the priesthood, and the grace of Christ, are themes which all the glorified souls converse with and rejoice in; yet spirits that have been trained up in them with peculiar delight for forty or fifty years, and devoted most of their time to these blessed contemplations, have surely gained some advantage by it, some peculiar fitness to receive the heavenly illuminations of these mysteries above their fellow-spirits.

There is also the soul of an ancient Eusebius, (*g*) and the later spirits of an Usher, (*h*) and a Burnet, (*i*) who have entertained themselves and the world with the sacred histories of the church, and the wonders of divine providence in its preservation and recovery. There is a Tillotson, (*k*) that has cultivated the subjects of holiness, peace, and love, by his pen and his practice: There is a Baxter, (*l*) that has wrought hard for an end of

(*a*) The honourable Robert Boyle, Esq. a most pious enquirer into nature, and an improver of the experimental philosophy.

(*b*) Mr. John Ray, one of the ministers ejected for nonconformity 1662, he employed most of his studies afterwards in the cultivation of natural philosophy, in collections and remarks on the variety of plants, birds, beasts, fishes, &c. and wrote several treatises to improve natural philosophy in the service of religion.

(*c*) Dr. Henry More, a great searcher into the world of spirits, and a pious divine of the church of England.

(*d*) Mr. John Howe, a name well known and highly honoured for his sagacity of thought, his exalted ideas, and converse with the spiritual world, as appears in his writings.

(*e*) Dr. Thomas Goodwin. And

(*f*) Dr. John Owen, two famous divines of prime reputation among the churches in the last century.

(*g*) Eusebius, one of the fathers of the christian church, who wrote the history of the primitive ages of christianity.

(*h*) Dr. John Usher, in the last century archbishop of Ardmagh, whose chronological writings and his piety have rendered his name honourable in the world.

(*i*) Dr. Gilbert Burnet, late bishop of Salisbury, whose serious religion, and zeal to promote it among the clergy, made him almost as famous as his *History of the English Reformation.*

(*k*) The names of Dr. John Tillotson, late archbishop of Canterbury; and of

(*l*) Mr. Richard Baxter, a divine of great note among the Protestant dissenters, need no further paraphrase to make them known.

controversies, and laboured with much zeal for the conversion of souls, though with much more success in the last than in the first.

Now though all the spirits in heaven enjoy the general happiness of the love of God and Christ, and the pleasurable review of providence; yet may we not suppose these spirits have some special circumstances of sacred pleasure, suited to their labours and studies in their state of trial on earth? For the church on earth is but a training-school for the church on high, and as it were a tiring-room in which we are dressed in proper habits for our appearance and our places in that bright assembly.

But some will reprove me here, and say, what must none but ministers, and authors, and learned men, have their distinguished rewards and glories in the world of spirits? May not artificers, and traders, and pious women, be fitted by their character and conduct on earth for peculiar stations and employments in heaven?

Yes doubtless, their zeal for the honour of God, their fervent love to Christ, their patience under long trials, and the variety of their graces exercised according to their stations on earth, may render them peculiarly fitted for special rewards on high: The wisdom of God will not be at a loss to find out distinguishing pleasures to recompense them all; though where the very station and business of this life is such as makes a nearer approach to the blessedness and business of heaven, it is much easier for us to guess at the nature of that future recompence.

Let me ask my own soul then, "Soul what art thou busy about? What is thy chief employment during thy present state of trial? I hope thou art not making *provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof;* for then thou art fit for no place in heaven, the doors will be for ever shut against thee. But what special works of the Spirit art thou engaged in? Dost thou redeem what hours thou art able, from necessary businesses of life, to do more immediate service for God, to converse with things heavenly? Art thou seeking to gain a proper meetness for the sublimer employments of that upper world, and a relish of the most refined pleasures."

But I proceed to the second particular:

II. The perfection of the spirits above, not only admits of a rich variety of entertainments, according to the various relish and inclination of the blessed, but it is such a perfection as allows of different degrees even in the same blessedness, according to the different capacities of spirits, and their different degrees of preparation. The word perfection does not always require equality.

If all the souls in heaven were of one mould, and make, and inclination, yet there may be different sizes of capacity even in the same genius, and a different degree of preparation for the same delights and enjoyments; therefore though all the spirits of the just were uniform in their natures and pleasures, and all perfect, yet one spirit may possess more happiness and glory than another, because it is more capacious of intellectual blessings, and better prepared for them. So when vessels of various size are thrown into the same ocean, there will be a great difference in the quantity of the liquid which they receive, though all might be full to the brim, and all made of the richest metal.

Now there is much evidence of this truth in the holy scripture. Our Saviour intimates such differences of rewards in several of his expressions. *Matt.* xix. 28. He promised the apostles, that they *shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.* And it is probable, this may denote something of superior honour or dignity above the

meanest of the saints. And even among the apostles themselves he seems to allow of a difference; for though he would not promise James and John to sit next to him, *on his right hand and his left in his kingdom*, Matt. xx. 20, &c. yet he does not deny that there are such distinct dignities, but says, *It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of his Father;* verse 23. Again our Lord says, Matt. x. 41, 42. *he that receives a prophet*, and entertains him as a prophet, *shall have a prophet's reward;* and he that entertains a righteous man, agreeable to his character, and from a real esteem of his righteousness, *shall have a righteous man's reward:* And even the meanest sort of entertainment, *a cup of cold water* given to a disciple, for the sake of his character, shall not go without some reward. Here are three sorts or degrees of reward mentioned, extending to the life to come, as well as to this life: Now though neither of them can be merited by works, but all are entirely conferred by grace, yet, as one observes here, "The Lord hath fixed a proportion between the work and the reward; so that as one has different degrees of goodness, the other shall have different degrees of excellency."

Our Saviour assures us, that the torments of hell shall admit of various degrees and distinctions; some will be more exquisite and terrible than others: *It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment*, who never sinned against half so much light, than it shall be for Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, where Christ himself had preached his gospel, and confirmed it with most evident miracles; *Matt.* xi. 21—24. And the servants who did not the will of their Lord, shall be beaten with more or fewer stripes, according to their different degrees of knowledge and advantages of instruction; *Luke* xii. 47, 48. Now may we not, by a parallel reasoning, suppose there will be various orders and degrees of reward in heaven, as well as punishment in hell; since there is scarce a greater variety among the degrees of wickedness among sinners on earth, than there is of holiness among the saints?

When the apostle is describing the glories of the body at the great resurrection, he seems to represent the differences of glory that shall be conferred on different saints, by the difference of the great luminaries of heaven; 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42. *There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another in glory: So also is the resurrection of the dead.*

The prophet Daniel led the way to this description, and the same Spirit taught the apostle the same language; Dan. xii. 2, 3. *And many of them, that sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt; and they that be wise shall shine*, with common glory, *as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness*, shall have a peculiar lustre, *as the stars, for ever and ever.* And if there be a difference in the visible glories of the saints at the resurrection, if *those who turn many to righteousness* shall sparkle in that day with brighter beams than those who are only wise for their own salvation, the same reason leads us to believe a difference of spiritual glory in the state of separate spirits, when the recompence of their labours is begun.

So, 1 Cor. iii. 8. *He that planteth, and he that watereth, are one, and every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour.* If all be rewarded alike, the apostle would not have said, each man shall receive according to his own labour. Surely, since there is a distinction of labours, there will be a distinction of rewards too.

And it is with this view that the same apostle exhorts the Corinthians, 1 Epist. xv. 58.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. Now that great labour and diligence, that stedfastness in profession, and that zeal in practice, to which the apostle exhorts them, might seem to be in vain, if those who were far less laborious, less zealous, and less stedfast, should obtain an equal recompence.

It is upon the same principle that he encourages them to holy patience under afflictive trials; 2 *Cor.* iv. 17. when he says, *our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not to the things that are seen,* and temporal, but to the things invisible and eternal. Now if the saint, who was called to heaven almost as soon as he was made a christian, and went through no sufferings, should possess the same weight of glory with the martyrs and confessors, under the long and tedious train of cruelties which they sustained from men, or painful trials from the hand of God, I cannot see how their afflictions could be said to work for them *a far more exeeeding weight of glory.*

He urges them also to great degrees of liberality from the same motive; 2 Cor. ix. 6. *This I say, he that soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, shall also reap bountifully.* Which words may reasonably be construed to signify the blessings of the life to come, as well as the blessings of the present life; for this apostle, speaking of the same duty of liberality, expresses the same encouragement under the same metaphors; Gal. vi. 6, 7, 8, 9. *Let him, that is taught in the word, communicate to him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deeeived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap: For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.* When God distributes the riches of his glory amongst the saints in heaven, he pours them out in a large and bountiful manner upon those who have distributed the good things of this life bountifully to the poor; but he rewards the narrow-souled christian with a more sparing hand.

With the same design does the apostle encourage christians to great watchfulness against sin and heresy, as well as ministers to a solicitous care of their doctrine and preaching; 1 Cor. iii. 12—15. *If any man build gold, silver, or preeious stones,* upon the true foundation Jesus Christ, and raise a glorious superstructure of truth and holiness, *he shall receive a reward* answerable to his skill and care in building; for his work shall stand, when it is tried by the fire of the judgment-day: But if he *build wood, hay, and stubble upon it,* evil inferences, and corrupt practices, or trifles, fruitless controversies, idle speculations, and vain ceremonies, *his works shall be burnt, and he shall suffer loss,* shall obtain a far less recompence of his labour: Yet, since he has laid Christ for the foundation, and has taught and practised the fundamental doctrines and duties of christianity, though mingled with much folly and weakness, *he himself shall be saved; yet in so* hazardous a manner as a man that is saved by fire, who loses all his goods, and just escapes with his life.

When you hear St. Paul or St. John, speaking of the last judgment, they give hints of the same distinction of rewards; 2 Cor. v. 10. *For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may reeeive the things done in his body, aeeording to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* Eph. vi. 8. *Whatsoever good thing any*

man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free; Rev. xxii. 12. *And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.* Though the highest and holiest saint in heaven can claim nothing there by the way of merit, for it is our Lord Jesus Christ alone who has purchased all those unknown blessings, yet he will distribute them according to the different characters and degrees of holiness which his saints possessed on earth; and those larger degrees of holiness were also the free gift of God our Saviour.

I have often represented it to my own thoughts under this comparison. Here is a race appointed; here are a thousand different prizes, purchased by some prince, to be bestowed on the racers: And the prince himself gives them food and wine, according to what proportion he pleases, to strengthen and animate them for the race. Each has a particular stage appointed for him, some of shorter, and some of longer distance. When every racer comes to his own goal, he receives a prize in most exact proportion to his speed, diligence, and length of race: And the grace and the justice of the prince shine gloriously in such a distribution. Not the foremost of the racers can pretend to have merited the prize; for the prizes were all paid for by the prince himself; and it was he that appointed the race, and gave them spirit and strength to run; and yet there is a most equitable proportion observed in the reward, according to the labours of the race. Now this similitude represents the matter so agreeably to the apostle's way of speaking, when he compares the christian life to a race; 1 *Cor.* xi. 24, &c. *Gal.* v. 7. *Philip.* iii. 14. 2 *Tim.* iv. 7. *Heb.* xii. 1. that I think it may be called almost a scriptural description of the present subject.

The reason of man and the light of nature entirely concur with scripture in this point. The glory of heaven is prepared for those who are prepared for it in a state of grace; *Rom.* ix. 23. It is God who makes each of us *meet for* our own *inheritance among the saints in light;* Col. i. 12. and then he bestows on us that inheritance.

As grace fits the soul for glory, so a larger degree of grace advances and widens the capacity of the soul, and prepares it to receive a larger degree of glory. The work of grace is but the means, the reward of glory is the end: Now the wisdom of God always fits and adjusts the means in a due proportion, to answer the end he designs, and the same wisdom ever makes the end answerable to the means he useth; and therefore he infuses more and higher glories into vessels more enlarged and better prepared.

Some of the spirits in heaven may be trained up by their stations and sacred services on earth for more elevated employments and joys on high. Can we imagine that the soul of David, *the sweet psalmist,* the prophet, and the king of Israel, is not fitted by all his labours and trials, all his raptures of faith, and love, and zeal, for some sublimer devotion and nobler business than his own infant child, the fruit of his adultery? And yet our divines have generally placed this child in heaven, because David ceased to mourn for him at his death, and said that he himself *should go to him;* 2 Sam. xii. 20, 23. *Deborah, the prophetess, judged Israel,* she animated their armies, and sung their victories: Is not Deborah engaged in some more illustrious employment among the heavenly tribes, than good Dorcas may seem to be capable of, whose highest character upon record is, that *she was full of alms-deeds, and made coats and garments for the poor;* Acts ix. 36, 39. And yet perhaps Dorcas is prepared too for some greater enjoyments, some sweeter relish of mercy, or some special taste of the divine goodness above Rahab the harlot; Rahab, whose younger character was lewd and infamous, and the

best thing that we read of her is, that her faith under the present terror of the armies of Israel taught her once to cover and conceal their spies: And unless she made great advances afterward in grace, surely her place is not very high in glory.

The worship of heaven, and the joy that attends it, may be exceedingly different in degrees, according to the different capacity of spirits; and yet all may be perfect and free from sinful defects. Does not the sparrow praise the Lord its Maker upon the ridge of a cottage, chirping in its native perfection? and yet the lark advances in her flight and her song as far above the sparrow, as the clouds are above the house-top.

Surely superior joys and glories must belong to superior powers and services.

Can we think that Abraham and Moses, who were trained up in converse with God *face to face, as a man converses with his friend*, and who followed him through the wilderness and unknown countries in a glorious exercise of faith, were not prepared for a greater intimacy with God, and nearer views of his glory in heaven, than Samson and Jephthah, those rude heroes, who being appointed of God for that service, spent their days in bloody work, in hewing down the Philistines and the Ammonites? For we read little of their acquaintance with God, or converse with him, beside a petition now and then, or a vow for victory and for slaughter; and we should hardly have charity enough to believe they were saved, if St. Paul had not placed them among the examples of faith in his eleventh chapter to the Hebrews. Can we ever believe that the thief upon the cross, who spent his life in plundering and mischief, and made a single though sincere profession of the name of Jesus just in his dying hour, was prepared for the same high station and enjoyment in paradise, so near the right hand of Christ, as the great apostle Paul, whose prayers and sermons, whose miracles of labour and suffering, filled up and finished a long life, and honoured his Lord and Saviour more than all the twelve apostles besides? Can we imagine that the child that is just born into this world under the friendly shadow of the covenant of grace, and weeps and dies, and is taken to heaven, is fit to be possessor of the same glories, or raised to the same degree there, as the studious, the laborious, and the zealous christian, that has lived above fourscore years on earth, and spent the greatest part of his life in the studies of religion, the exercises of piety, and the zealous and painful services of God and his country? Surely, if all these which I have named must have equal knowledge and joy in the future world, it is hard to find how such an exact equity shall be displayed in the distribution of final rewards, as the word of God so frequently describes.

Objection. But in the parable of the labourers hired to work in the vineyard, *Matt.* xx. 9, 12. does not every man receive his penny, they who were called at the first and third hour, and they who were called at the last? Were not their rewards all equal, *those who had wrought but one hour*, and *those who had borne the burden and heat of the day?*

Answer. It is not the design of this parable to represent the final rewards of the saints at the day of judgment, but to shew that the nation of the Jews, who had been called to be the people of God above a thousand years before, and had borne the burden and heat of the day, that is, the toil and bondage of many ceremonies, should have no preference in the esteem of God above the gentiles, who were called at the last hour, or at the end of the Jewish dispensation; for it is said, verse 16. *the last shall be first, and the first last;* that is, the gentiles, who waited long ere the gospel was preached to them, shall be the first in receiving it; and the Jews, to whom it was first offered, from an inward scorn and pride shall reject it, or receive it but slowly: And Christ adds

this confirmation of it, *for many be called, but few chosen;* that is, though multitudes of Jews were called to believe in Christ, that few accepted the call.

There is another reason why this parable cannot refer to the final rewards of heaven; because, *verse* 11. it is said, Some of them *murmured against the good man of the house.* Now there shall be no envy against their fellow-saints, nor murmuring against God in the heavenly state. But the Jews, and even the Jewish converts to christianity, were ready often to murmur that the gospel should be preached to the gentile world, and that the heathens should be brought into privileges equal to themselves.

Thus it sufficiently appears, from the frequent declarations of scripture, as well as from the reason and equity of things, that the rewards of the future world shall be greatly distinguished, according to the different degrees of holiness and service for God, even though every spirit there shall be perfect; nor is there any just and reasonable objection against it.

Is it certain then that heaven has various degrees of happiness in it, and shall my spirit rest contented with the meanest place there, and the least and lowest measure? Hast thou no sacred ambition in thee, O my soul, to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? Or dost thou not aspire, at least, to the middle ranks of glorified saints, though perhaps thou mayest despair of those most exalted stations which are prepared for the spirits of chief renown, for Abraham and Moses of ancient time, and for the martyrs and the apostles of the Lamb? Wilt thou not stir up all the vigour of nature and grace within thee, to do great service for thy God and thy Saviour on earth, that thy reward in heaven may not be small? Wilt thou not *run with* zeal and *patience the race that is set before thee,* looking to the brightest cloud of witnesses, and reaching at some of the richer prizes? Remember that Jesus thy Judge is coming apace: He has rewards with him of every size, and the lustre and weight of thy crown shall most exactly correspond to thy sweat and labour.

But I must not dwell always on this head: I proceed therefore to the next.

III. The spirits of the just in heaven enjoy such a perfection as is consistent with perpetual changes of bnsiness and delights, even in the same person or spirit. They may be always perfect, but in a rich and endless variety.

It is only God who possesses all possible excellencies, and powers, and happinesses at once, and therefore he alone is incapable of change: But creatures must possess and enjoy their delights in a succession, because they cannot possess and enjoy all that they are capable of at once. And according to this consideration, the heavenly state is represented in scripture in various forms, both of business and blessedness.

Sometimes it is described by *seeing God;* Matt. v. 8. by *beholding him face to face;* 1 Cor. xiii. 12. by being *present with the Lord;* 2 Cor. v. 8. by being where Christ *is to behold his glory;* John xvii. 24. Sometimes the saints above are said *to serve him* as his servants; *Rev.* xxii. 3. Sometimes they are represented as worshipping before the throne, as being fed with the fruits of the tree of life, and drinking the living fountains of water; *Rev.* vii. 15, 17. and xxii. 1, 2. and let it be noted, that *twelve manner of fruits* grew on this tree, and they were new *every month* also. Sometimes they are held forth to us *as singing a new song to God, and to the Lamb;* Rev. xiv. 3. And at another time they are described as wearing *a crown of righteousness* and glory, of sitting on the throne of Christ, *of reigning for ever and ever, and ruling the nations with a rod of iron;*

2 Tim. iv. 8. 1 Pet. v. 4. Rev. xxii. 5. Rev. ii. 26, 27. And in another place, our happiness is represented as sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; *Matt.* viii. 11. Now surely this rich variety of language, whereby the heavenly state is proposed to us in scripture, must intend a variety of entertainments and employments, that may in some measure answer the glory of such expressions.

It is not only the powers of our understanding that shall be regaled and feasted in those happy regions with the blissful vision of God and Christ, but our active powers shall doubtless have their proper entertainments too. When angels are so variously and delightfully employed in service for God, in his several known and unknown worlds, we cannot suppose the spirits of just men shall be eternally confined to a sedentary state of inactive contemplation.

Contemplation indeed is a noble pleasure, and the joy of it rises high when it is fixed on the sublimest objects, and when the faculties are all exalted and refined. But surely such a sight of God and our dear Redeemer, as we shall enjoy above, will awaken and animate all the active and sprightly powers of the soul, and set all the springs of love and zeal at work in the most illustrious instances of unknown and glorious duty.

I confess heaven is described as a place of rest, that is, rest from sin and sorrow, rest from pain and weariness, rest from all the toilsome labours and conflicts that we endure in a state of trial; but it can never be such a rest as lays all our active powers asleep, or renders them useless in such a vital and active world. It would diminish the happiness of the saints in glory to be unemployed there. Those spirits who have tasted unknown delight and satisfaction in many long seasons of devotion, and in a thousand painful services for their blessed Lord on earth, can hardly bear the thoughts of paying no active duties, doing no work at all for him in heaven, where business is all over delight, and labour is all enjoyment. Surely *his servants shall serve him* there, as well as worship him, They shall serve him perhaps as priests in his temple, and as kings, or viceroys, in his wide dominions; for they *are made kings and priests unto God for ever;* Rev. v. 10.

But let us dwell a little upon their active employments, and perhaps a close and attentive meditation may lead us into an unexpected view and notice of their sacred commissions and embassies, their governments, and their holy conferences, as well as their acts of worship and adoration.

That heaven is a place or state of worship, is certain, and beyond all controversy; for this is a very frequent description of it in the word of God. And as the great God has been pleased to appoint different forms of worship to be practised by his saints, and his churches under the different œconomies of his grace, so it is possible he may appoint peculiar forms of sacred magnificence to attend his own worship in the state of glory. Bowing the knee, and prostration of the body, are forms and postures of humility practised by earthly worshippers. Angels cover their faces and their feet with their wings, and cry, *holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts!* Isaiah vi. 2, 3. But what unknown and illustrious forms shall be consecrated by the appointment and authority of Christ, for the unbodied or the bodied saints in heaven to adorn their sacred offices, is above our reach to describe or to imagine.

Let us consider now what parts of worship the blessed are employed in.

The various parts of divine worship that are practised on earth, at least such as are

included in natural religion, shall doubtless be performed in heaven too; and what other unknown worship of positive and celestial appointment shall belong to the heavenly state, is as much above our present conjecture, as the forms of it are.

Heaven is represented as full of praises. There is the most glorious and perfect celebration of God the Father and the Saviour in the upper world: And the highest praise is offered to them with the deepest humility. The crowns of glory are cast down at their feet, and all the powers and perfections of God, with all his labours of creation, his cares of providence, and the sweeter mysteries of his grace, shall furnish noble matter for divine praise. This work of praise is also exhibited in scripture, as attended with a song and heavenly melody. What there is in the world of separate spirits to answer the representations of harps and voices, we know not. It is possible that spirits may be capable of some sort of harmony in their language, without a tongue, and without an ear; and there may be some inimitable and transporting modulations of divine praise, without the material instruments of string or wind. The soul itself, by some philosophers, is said to be mere harmony; and surely then it will not wait for it till the body be raised from the dust, nor live so long destitute of all melodious joys, or of that spiritual pleasure which shall supply the place of melody, till our organs of sense shall be restored to us again.

But is all heaven made up of praises? Is there no prayer there? Let us consider a little: What is prayer, but the desire of a created spirit in an humble manner made known to its Creator? Does not every saint above desire to know God, to love and serve him, to be employed for his honour, and to enjoy the eternal continuance of his love and its own felicity? May not each happy spirit in heaven exert these desires in a way of solemn address to the divine Majesty? May not the happy soul acknowledge its dependance in this manner upon its Father and its God? Is there no place in the heart of a glorified saint for such humble addresses as these? Does not every separate spirit there look and long for the resurrection, when it is certain that embodied spirits on earth who have *received the first fruits of* grace and glory, *groan within themselves, waiting for the redemption of the body?* Rom. viii. 23. And may we not suppose each holy soul sending a sacred and fervent wish after this glorious day, and lifting up a desire to its God about it, though without the uneasiness of a sigh or a groan? May it not, under the influence of divine love, breathe out the requests of its heart, and the expressions of its zeal for the glory and kingdom of Christ? May not the church above join with the churches below in this language, Father, *thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven?* Are not the souls of the martyrs that were slain represented to us as under the altar, crying with a loud voice, *how long, O Lord, holy and true?* Rev. vi. 9, 10. This looks like the voice of prayer in heaven.

Perhaps you will suppose there is no such service as hearing sermons, that there is no attendance upon the word of God there. But are we sure there are no such entertainments? Are there no lectures of divine wisdom and grace given to the younger spirits there, by spirits of a more exalted station? Or may not our Lord Jesus Christ himself be the everlasting teacher of his church? May he not, at solemn seasons, summon all heaven to hear him publish some new and surprising discoveries, which have never yet been made known to the ages of nature or of grace, and are reserved to entertain the attention, and exalt the pleasure of spirits advanced to glory? Must we learn all by the

mere contemplation of Christ's person? Does he never make use of speech to the instruction and joy of saints above?

Moses and Elijah came down once from heaven to make a visit to Christ on mount Tabor, and the subject of their converse with him was his death and departure from this world; *Luke* ix. 31. Now since our Lord is ascended to heaven, are these holy souls cut off from this divine pleasure? Is Jesus for ever silent? Does he converse with his glorified saints no more? And surely if he speak, the saints will hear and attend.

Or it may be that our blessed Lord, even as he is man, has some noble and unknown way of communicating a long discourse, or a long train of ideas and discoveries to millions of blessed spirits at once, without the formalities of voice and language; and at some peculiar seasons he may thus instruct and delight his saints in heaven. Thus it appears there may be something among the spirits of the just above, that is analogous to prayer and preaching, as well as praise. O how gustful are the pleasures of celestial worship! What unknown varieties of performance, what sublime ministrations there are, and glorious services, none can tell. And in all this variety, which may be performed in sweet succession, there is no wandering thought, no cold affection, no divided heart, no listless or indifferent worshipper. What we call rapture and ecstasy here on earth, is perhaps the constant and uninterrupted pleasure of the church on high in all their adorations.

But let the worship of the glorified spirits be never so various, yet I cannot persuade myself that mere direct acts or exercises of what we properly call worship, are their only and everlasting work. The scripture tells us, there are certain seasons when the angels, those sons of God, come to present themselves before the Lord; *Job* i. 6. and ii. 1. It is evident then, that the intervals of these seasons are spent in other employments: And when they present themselves before God, it does not sufficiently appear that mere adoration and praise is their only business at the throne. In the very place which I have cited, it seems more natural to suppose, that these angelic spirits came thither rather to render an account of their several employments, and the success of their messages to other worlds. And why may we not suppose such a blessed variety of employment among the spirits of men too?

This supposition has some countenance in the holy scripture. The angel or messenger who appeared to St. *John*, and shewed him various visions, by the order of Christ, forbids the apostle to worship him, *for I am thy fellow-servant*, said he, *and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book;* Rev. xxii. 8, 9. These words naturally lead one to think, that though he appeared as a messenger from Christ, and in the form of an angel, yet he was really a departed saint, a brother, a fellow-prophet, perhaps the soul of David, or Isaiah, or Moses, who would count it an honour, even in their state of glory, to be thus employed by their exalted Lord; and they also keep or observe, and wait for the accomplishment of the sayings of that book of the Revelations, as well as the churches of their brethren, the saints on earth.

I freely allow immediate divine worship to take up a good part of their everlasting day, their sabbath; and therefore I suppose them to be often engaged, millions at once, in social worship; and sometimes acting apart, and raised in sublime meditation of God, or in a fixed vision of his blissful face, with an act of secret adoration, while their intellectual powers are almost lost in sweet amazement: Sometimes they are entertaining themselves and their fellow-spirits with the graces and glories of the man Christ Jesus,

the Lamb that was slain, in the midst of the throne: But at other times they may be making a report to him of their faithful execution of some divine commission they received from him, to be fulfilled either in heaven or on earth, or in unknown and distant worlds.

There may be other seasons also when they are not immediately addressing the throne, but are most delightfully engaged in recounting to each other the wondrous steps of providence, wisdom, and mercy, that seized them from the very borders of hell and despair, and brought them through a thousand dangers and difficulties to the possession of that fair inheritance. When the great God shall unravel the scheme of his own counsels, shall unfold every part of his mysterious conduct, and set before them the reason of every temptation they grappled with, and of every sorrow they felt here on earth, and with what divine and successful influence they all wrought together to train them up for heaven, what matter of surprising delight and charming conversation shall this furnish the saints with in that blessed world? And now and then, in the midst of their sacred dialogues, by a sympathy of soul they shall shout together in sweet harmony, and join their exalted songs *to him that sits upon the throne and to the Lamb.* "*Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us,* but to thy power, to thy wisdom, and to thine abounding mercy, be renown and honour to everlasting ages."

Nor is it improper or unpleasant to suppose, that among the rest of their celestial conferences, they shall shew each other the fair and easy solution of those difficulties and deep problems in divinity, which had exercised and perplexed them here on earth, and divided them into little angry parties. They shall look back with holy shame on some of their learned and senseless distinctions, and be ready to wonder sometimes what trifles and impertinences had engaged them in dark and furious disputes. Darkness and entanglement shall vanish at once from many of those knotty points of controversy, when they behold them in the light of heaven: And the rest of them shall be matter of delightful instruction for superior spirits to bestow upon those of lower rank, or on souls lately arrived at the regions of light. In short, there is nothing written in the books of nature, the records of providence, or the sacred volumes of grace, but may minister materials at special seasons for the holy conference of the saints on high. No history nor prophecy, no doctrine nor duty, no command nor promise, nor threatening in the Bible, but may recal the thoughts of the heavenly inhabitants, and engage them in sweet conversation. All things that relate to the affairs of past ages and past worlds, as well as the present regions of light and happiness where they dwell, may give them new themes of dialogue and mutual intercourse.

And though we are very little acquainted, whilst we are on earth, with any of the planetary worlds besides that which we inhabit, yet who knows how our acquaintance may be extended hereafter, amongst the inhabitants of the various and distant globes? And what frequent and swift journeys we may take thither, when we are disencumbered of this load of flesh and blood, or when our bodies are raised again, active and swift as sunbeams? Sometimes we may entertain our holy curiosity there, and find millions of new discoveries of divine power and divine contrivance in those unknown regions; and bring back from thence new lectures of divine wisdom, or tidings of the affairs of those provinces, to entertain our fellow-spirits, and to give new honours to God the Creator and the Sovereign. So a pious traveller in our lower world visits Africa or both the Indies: At his return he sits in a circle of attentive admirers, and recounts to them the

wondrous products of those climates, and the customs and manners of those distant countries: He gratifies their curiosity with some foreign varieties, and feasts their eyes and their ears at once: Then at the end of every story he breaks out into holy language, and adores the various riches and wisdom of God the Creator.

To proceed yet one step farther. Since there are different degrees of glory, we may infer a variety of honours as well as delights prepared for the spirits of the just made perfect.

Some part of the happiness of heaven is described in scripture by crowns and thrones, by royalty and kingly honours: Why may we not then suppose that such souls, whose sublimer graces have prepared them for such dignity and office, may *rule the nations*, even in a literal sense? Why may not those spirits that have passed their trials in flesh and blood, and come off conquerors, why may they not sometimes be appointed visitors and superintendants over whole provinces of intelligent beings in lower regions, who are yet labouring in their state of probation? or perhaps they may be exalted to a presidency over inferior ranks of happy spirits, may shine bright amongst them as the morning star, and lead on their holy armies to celestial work or worship. The scripture itself gives us a hint of such employments in the angelic world, and such presidencies over some parts of our world, or of their own. Do we not read of Gabriel and Michael, and their management of the affairs of Persia, and Greece, and Judah, in the book of Daniel? And it is an intimation of the same hierarchy, when some superior angel led on *a multitude of the heavenly host* to sing a hymn of praise at Bethlehem, when the Son of God was born there; *Luke* ii. 9, 13. Now if angels are thus dignified, may not human spirits unbodied have the same office? Our Saviour, when he rewards the faithful servant that had *gained ten pounds*, bids him take *authority over ten cities; and he that had gained five, had five cities* under his government; *Luke* xix. 17, &c. So that this is not a mere random thought, or a wild invention of fancy, but patronised by the word of God.

Among the pleasures and engagements of the upper world, there shall be always something new and entertaining; for the works and the dominions of God are vast beyond all our comprehension. And what a perpetual change, what a glorious but improving rotation of businesses and joys shall succeed one another through the ages of eternity, we shall never know till we come among them. This thought leads me to the last particular, *viz.*

IV. The perfection which the blessed spirits enjoy, gives room for large additions and continual improvement.

Their knowledge and their joy may be called perfect, because there is no mixture of error or sorrow with it; and because it is sufficient every moment for the satisfaction of present desires, without an uneasiness of mind. But it may be doubted whether any creature ever was, or ever will be so perfect, that it is not capable of addition or growth in any excellency or enjoyment.

The man Christ Jesus, in his present glorified state, has not such a perfection as this. He waits daily to see his Father's promises fulfilled to him; he waits *till all things are put under him, and his enemies be made his actual footstool:* But we know that *all things are not yet put under him;* Heb. ii. 8. that is, all the nations are not yet subject to his spiritual kingdom, nor become obedient to his gospel. As fast as his kingdom grows on earth, so fast his honours and his joys arise; and he waits still for the complete union of all his members to himself the sacred head: He waits for the morning of the resurrection,

when he shall *be glorified* in the bright and general assembly of *his saints, and admired in all them that believe;* 2 Thess. i. 10.

O that illustrious and magnificent appearance! That shining hour of jubilee, when the bodies of millions of saints shall awake out of the dust, and be released from their long dark prison! When they shall encompass and adore Jesus their Saviour and their God, and acknowledge their new life and immortal state to be owing to his painful and shameful death: When Noah, Abraham, and David, and all his pious progenitors, shall bow and worship Jesus their Son and their Lord: When the holy army of martyrs, springing from the dust with palms of victory in their hands, shall ascribe their conquest and their triumph *to the Lamb that was slain:* When he shall *present his whole church before the presence of his own and his Father's glory, without spot, and faultless, with exceeding joy!* Can we imagine that Christ himself, even the man Jesus, in the midst of all this magnificence and these honours, shall feel no new satisfaction, and have no relish of all this joy, above what he possessed while his church lay bleeding on earth, and this illustrious company were buried under ground in the chains of death? And yet you will say Christ in heaven is made perfect in knowledge and in joy, but his perfection admits of improvement.

Now if the head be not above the capacity of all growth and addition, surely the members cannot pretend to it. But I shall propose several more arguments for this truth in the following section.

SECTION IV.

OF THE INCREASE OF THE SAINTS ABOVE IN KNOWLEDGE, HOLINESS, AND JOY.

That there is, and hath been, and will be continual progress and improvement in the knowledge and joy of separate souls, may be easily proved many ways, *viz.* from the very nature of human reason itself; from the narrowness, the weakness and limitation even of our intellectual faculties in their best estate; from the immense variety of objects that we shall converse about; from our peculiar concern in some future providences, which it is not likely we should know before they occur; and from the glorious new scenes of the resurrection.

1. We may prove the increase of knowledge amongst the blessed above, from the very nature of human reason itself, which is a faculty of drawing inferences, or some new propositions and conclusions, from propositions or principles which we knew before. Now surely we shall not be dispossessed of this power when we come to heaven. What we learn of God there, and the glories of his nature, or his works, will assist and incline us to draw inferences for his honour, and for our worship of him. And if we could be supposed to have never so many propositions, or new principles of knowledge, crowded into our minds at the first entrance into heaven, yet surely our reasoning faculty would still be capable of making some advance by way of inference, or building some superstructure upon so noble a foundation. And who knows the intense pleasure that will arise perpetually to a contemplative mind, by a progressive and infinite pursuit of truth in this manner, where we are secure against the danger of all error and mistake, and every step we take is all light and demonstration.

Shall it be objected here, that our reason shall be, as it were, lost and dissolved in

intuition and immediate sight, and therefore it shall have no room or place in that happy world?

To this I would reply, that we shall have indeed much more acquaintance with spiritual objects by immediate intuition, than we ever had here on earth; but it does not follow thence, that we shall lose our reason. Angels have immediate vision of God and divine things; but can we suppose they are utterly incapable of drawing an inference, either for the improvement of their knowledge, or the direction of their practice? When they behold any special and more curious piece of divine workmanship, can they not further infer the exquisite skill or wisdom of the Creator? And are they not capable of concluding, that this peculiar instance of divine wisdom demands an adoring thought? Thus intuition, or immediate sight in a creature, does not utterly exclude and forbid the use of reason.

I reply again, can it ever be imagined, that being released from the body, we shall possess in one moment, and retain through every moment of eternity, all the innumerable ranks, and orders, and numbers of propositions, truths and duties, that may be derived in a long succession of ages by the use of our reasoning powers? But this leads me to the second argument, *viz.*

2. The weakness and narrowness of human understandings, in their best estate, seem to make it necessary that knowledge should be progressive.

Continual improvement in knowledge and delight among the spirits of the just made perfect, is necessary for the same reason that proved their variety of entertainments and pleasures, *viz.* because creatures cannot take in all the vast, the infinite variety of conceptions in the full brightness and perfection of them at once, of which they are capable in a sweet succession. Can we ever persuade ourselves, that all the endless train of thoughts, and ideas, and scenes of joy, that shall ever pass through the mind of a saint through the long ages of eternity, should be crowded into every single mind, the first moment of its entrance into those happy regions? And is a human mind capacious enough to receive, and strong enough to retain such an infinite multitude of ideas for ever? Or, *is this the manner of* God's working among his intellectual creatures? Surely God *knows our frame*, and pours in light and glory as we are able to bear it. Such a bright confusion of notions, images, and transports, would probably overwhelm the most exalted spirit, and drown all the noble faculties of the mind at once. As if a man who was born blind, should be healed in an instant, and should open his eyes first against the full blaze of the noon-day sun; this would so tumultuate the spirits, and confound the organs of sight, as to reduce the man back again to his first blindness, and perhaps might render him incurable for ever.

3. This argument will be much strengthened, if we do but take a short view of the vast and incomprehensible variety of objects that may be proposed to our minds in the future state, and may feast our contemplation, and improve our joy.

The blessed God himself is an infinite being: His perfections and glories are unbounded: His wisdom, his holiness, his goodness, his faithfulness, his power and justice, his all-sufficiency, his self-origination, and his unfathomable eternity, have such a number of rich ideas belonging to each of them, that no creature shall ever fully understand. Yet it is but reasonable to believe, that he will communicate so much of himself to us by degrees, as he sees necessary for our business and blessedness in that upper world. Can it be supposed that we should know every thing that belongs to God all at once,

which he may discover to us gradually as our capacities improve? Can we think that an infant soul, that had no time for improvement here, when it enters into heaven shall know every thing concerning God, that it can ever attain to through all the ages of its immortality? When a blessed spirit has dwelt in heaven a thousand years, and conversed with God and Christ, angels and fellow-spirits, during all that season, shall it know nothing more of the nature and wondrous properties of God, than it knew the first moment of its arrival there?*

But I add further, the works of God shall doubtless be the matter of our search and delightful survey, as well as the nature and properties of God himself. *His works are honourable and glorious, and sought out of all that have pleasure in them;* Psalm cxi. 2, 3. In his works we shall read his name, his properties, and his glories, whether we fix our thoughts on creation or providence.

The works of God and his wonders of creation in the known and unknown worlds, both as to the number, the variety, and vastness of them, are almost infinite; that is, they transcend all the limits of our ideas, and all our present capacities to conceive. Now there is none of these works of wonder, but may administer some entertainment to the mind of man, and may richly furnish him with new matter for the praise of God in the long successions of eternity.

There is scarce an animal of the more complete kind, but would entertain an angel with rich curiosities, and feed his contemplation for an age. What a rich and artful structure of flesh upon the solid and well-compacted foundation of bones! What curious joints and hinges, on which the limbs are moved to and fro! What an inconceivable variety of nerves, veins, arteries, fibres, and little invisible parts, are found in every member! What various fluids, blood and juices, run through and agitate the innumerable slender tubes, the hollow strings and strainers of the body! What millions of folding doors are fixed within, to stop those red or transparent rivulets in their course, either to prevent their return backwards, or else as a means to swell the muscles and move the limbs! What endless contrivances to secure life, to nourish nature, and to propagate the same to future animals! What amazing lengths of holy meditation would an angel run upon these subjects! And what sublime strains of praise would a heavenly philosopher raise hourly to the Almighty and All-wise Creator! And all this from the mere brutal world!

But if we survey the nature of man, he is a creature made up of mind and animal united, and would furnish still more numerous and exalted materials for contemplation and praise; for he has all the richest wonders of animal nature in him, besides the unknown mysteries of mind or spirit. Surely it will create a sacred pleasure in happy souls above, to learn the wonders of divine skill exerted and shining in their own formation, and in the curious workmanship of those bodily engines in which they once dwelt and acted.

Then let them descend to herbs and plants. How numerous are all the products of earth upon her green surface, and all within her dark bowels! All the vegetable and the mineral kingdoms! How many centuries would all these entertain a heavenly enquirer!

* God himself hath infinite goodness in him, which the creature cannot take in at once; they are taking of it in eternally. The saints see in God still things fresh, which they saw not in the beginning of their blessedness. Dr. *T. Goodwin.*

The worlds of air, and the worlds of water, the planetary and the starry worlds, are still new objects rich with curiosities; these are all monuments of divine wisdom, and fit subjects for the contemplation of the blessed. Nor can we be supposed to have for ever done with them all when we leave this body, and that for two reasons: One is, because God has never yet received the honour due to his wisdom and power, displayed in the material creation, from the hands or tongues of men. And the other is, because *the spirits of the just* shall be joined to bodies again, and then they shall certainly have necessary converse with God's material works and worlds; though perhaps they have more acquaintance with them now in their separate state than we are apprized of.

And besides all these material works of God, what an unknown variety of other wonders belong to the world of pure spirits which lie hid from us, and are utterly concealed behind the veil of flesh and blood! What are their natures, and the reach of their powers! What ranks and orders they are distributed into! What are their governments, their several employments, the different customs and manners of life in the various and most extensive regions of that intellectual world! What are their messages to our earth, or the other habitable globes, and what capacities they are endowed with to move or influence animate or inanimate bodies! All these, and a thousand more of the like nature, are made known doubtless to the inhabitants of heaven. These are things that belong to the provinces of light and immortality, but many of them are mysteries to us who dwell in these tabernacles; they lie far beyond our ken, and are wrapped up in sacred darkness, that we can hardly do so much as shoot a guess at them.

Now can we suppose that the meanest spirit in heaven has a full and entire survey of all these innumerable works of God, from the first moment of its entrance thither, throughout all the ages of immortality, without the change of one idea, or the possibility of any improvement? This would be to give a sort of omniscience to every happy spirit, which is more than is generally allowed to the man Christ Jesus. And if there be such a thing as degrees of glory among the saints above, we may be well assured that the lowest rank of blessed spirits is not advanced to this amazing degree.

Is there *no new thing*, neither *under* nor above *the sun*, that God can entertain any of his children with in the upper world, throughout the infinite extent of all future ages? Are they all made at once so much like God as to know all things? Or if each of them have their stinted size of knowledge, or their limited number of ideas at their first release from their body, then they are everlastingly cut off from all the surprises of pleasure that arise from new thoughts, and new scenes, and new discoveries. Does every saint in heaven read God's great volume of nature through and through the first hour it arrives there? Or is each spirit confined to a certain number of leaves, and bound eternally to learn nothing new, but to review perpetually his own limited lesson? Dares he not, or can he not, turn over another leaf, and read his Creator's name in it, and adore his wisdom in new wonders of contrivance? These things are improbable to such a high degree, that I dare almost pronounce them untrue.

The book of providence is another volume wherein God writes his name too. Has every single saint such a vast and infinite length of foreknowledge given him at his first admission into glory, that he knows beforehand all the future scenes of providence, and the wonders which God shall work in the upper and lower worlds? I thought the *lion of the tribe of Judah, the root and the offspring of David*, had been the only person *in heaven or earth that was worthy to take the book, and loose the seven seals thereof;* Rev. v. 5. Surely

the meanest of the saints does not foreknow all those great and important counsels of God which our Lord Jesus Christ is entrusted with. And yet we may venture to say, that the spirits of the just in heaven shall know those great and important events that relate to the church on earth, as they arise in successive seasons, that they may give to God, and to his Son Jesus Christ revenues of due honour upon this account, as I shall prove immediately.

And indeed if the limits of their knowledge in heaven were so fixed at their first entrance there, that they could never be acquainted with any of these successive providences of God afterwards, we here on earth have a great advantage above them, who see daily the accomplishment of his divine counsels, and adore the wonders of his wisdom and his love; and from this daily increase of knowledge we take our share in the growing joys and blessings of Zion.

But this thought leads me to the fourth argument for the increase of knowledge in heaven.

4. There have been, and there are, many future providences on earth, and transactions in heaven, in which the spirits of the just have a very great and dear concernment, and therefore they must know them when they come to pass; and yet it is by no means probable, that they are known in all their glorious circumstances beforehand by every spirit in heaven.

Let us descend a little to some particular instances, and see whether we cannot make it appear from scripture, with most convincing evidence, that the saints in heaven obtain some additions to their knowledge, by the various new transactions in heaven and in earth.

When our blessed Lord had fulfilled his state of sorrows and sufferings on earth, and ascended into heaven in his glorified human nature, with all the scars of honour, and the ensigns of victory about him; when the Lamb appeared in the midst of the throne with the marks of slaughter and death upon him, and presented himself before God in the midst of angels and ancient patriarchs, with the accomplishment of all the types and promises about him written in letters of blood; did not those blessed angels, did not the spirits of those patriarchs, learn something more of the mysteries of our redemption, and the wondrous glories of the Redeemer, than what they were acquainted with before? And did not this new glorious scene spread new ideas, new joys and wonders through all the heavenly world? Can the principalities and powers in heavenly places gain by the church on earth any farther discoveries of *the manifold wisdom of God?* Eph. iii. 10. And can we believe that when Christ, the head of the church, entered into heaven in so illustrious a manner, that these powers, principalities, and blessed spirits, got no brighter discoveries of divine wisdom? To what purpose do *they look and* pry *into these things*, 1 Pet. i. 12. if after all their searches they make no advances in knowledge? And must angels be the only proficients in these sublime sciences, while human spirits make no improvement? Can it be supposed that those ancient fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to whom the promises were made, *that all the nations should be blessed in their seed*, had no transporting pleasures when they first beheld that promised seed crowned with all his glory; when they saw their Son Jesus *ascending on high, and leading captivity captive*, and *the chariots of God* that attended him were *twenty thousand*, even an innumerable company of angels; *Psalm* lxviii. 17, 18.

If upon this occasion we may talk in the language of mortals, may we not suppose those ancient fathers raising themselves on high, and overlooking the walls of paradise, to

gaze downward upon this ascending triumph? May we not imagine them speaking thus to each other in the holy transport: "And is this our great descendant? Is this our long-expected offspring? How divine his aspect! How godlike his air! How glorious and adorable all the graces of his countenance! Is this, saith holy David, my Son and my Lord? the king of glory, for whose admission I called the gates of heaven *to be lifted up, and opened the everlasting doors* for him in an ancient song? Is this the man whose hands and whose feet they pierced on earth, as I once foretold by the spirit of prophecy? I see those blessed scars of honour; how they adorn his glorified limbs! I acknowledge and adore my God and my Saviour. I begun his triumph once on my harp in a lower strain, and I behold him now ascending on high: *Awake my glory*, he comes, he comes, with the sound of a trumpet, and with the pomp of shouting angels; *sing praises*, all ye saints, *unto our God, sing praises, unto our king, sing praises.* Is this, saith Isaiah, the *child born* of whom I spoke? Is this *the Son given* of whom I prophesied? I adore him as the *mighty God, the Father of ages, and the Prince of peace.* I see the righteous branch, adds the prophet Jeremy, the righteous branch from the stem of David, from the root of Jesse. This is the king whom I foretold *should reign in righteousness:* The Lord my righteousness is his name, I rejoice at his appearance, the throne of heaven is made ready for him. This, saith Daniel, is the *Messiah, the Prince*, who was *cut off, but not for himself:* The *seventy weeks* are all fulfilled, and the work is done. *He hath finished transgression, and made an end of sin, and hath brought in everlasting righteousness for all his people.* But was this the person, saith Zachary the prophet, whom they sold for *thirty pieces of silver?* Vile indignity and impious madness! Behold he now appears like the man who is *fellow*, or companion to the *Lord of hosts.* It is he, saith Malachi, it is he, *the messenger of the covenant*, who came suddenly to his own temple. There I held him in my withered arms, saith aged Simeon, and rapture and prophecy came upon me at once, and I expired in joy and praises.

And we hope our mother Eve stood up among the rest of them, and beheld and confessed *the promised seed* of the woman. "O blessed Saviour, that didst break *the head of the serpent*, though thy *heel was bruised*, and hast abolished the mischief that my folly and his temptation had brought into thy new-created world!"

Now could we ever suppose all this to be done in the upper regions, with no new smiles upon the countenances of the saints, no special increase of joy among *the spirits of the just made perfect?* God himself stands in no need of the magnificence of these transactions: Christ Jesus receives the new honours, and all the old inhabitants of heaven taste new and unknown satisfaction in the honours they pay to their exalted Saviour. Some of the ancients were of opinion, that the souls of the fathers before the ascension of Christ were not admitted into the holy of holies, or the blissful vision of God; but that it was our Lord Jesus, our great High-priest, at his ascent to the throne, led the way thither: He rent the veil of the lower heaven, and carried with him the armies of the patriarchal souls into some upper and brighter, and more joyful regions, whereas before they were only admitted into a state of peace and rest. Whether this be so or no the scripture does not sufficiently declare: But whatsoever region of heaven they were placed in, we may be well assured, from the very nature of things, that such transactions as the triumphant ascent of Christ, could never pass through any of the upper worlds without enlarging the knowledge and the joy of the blessed inhabitants.

When our Lord Jesus Christ sat down at the right hand of God, he *prevailed to open*

the book of divine counsels and decrees, *Rev.* v. 5. and to acquaint himself with all the contents: And this was necessary that he might manage and govern the affairs of the church and the world in the several successive ages, according to the counsels of the Father. He therefore, and he alone among creatures, *knows the end from the beginning*, as I hinted before. But as the seals of this book are opened by degrees, and the counsels of God are executed in the lower world, doubtless the angels that are ministers of the providence of Christ carry tidings to heaven of all the greater changes that relate to the church; and Jesus the Son of God, the King of saints and of nations, receives the shouts and honours of the heavenly world, as fast as the joyful tidings arrive thither.

Nor is this spoken by mere conjecture, for the scripture informs us of the certainty of it. We have frequent accounts in the book of Revelations of new special honours that were paid *to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb at* certain special periods of time.

When he first took upon him the execution of his Father's decrees, the living creatures *and elders fell down before the Lamb, and they sung a new song, saying, thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof;* and ten thousand times ten thousand angels echoed to the song with a loud voice, *worthy is the Lamb that was slain*, &c.; Rev. v. 8, 9, 11. So when the servants of God were sealed in their foreheads, the innumerable multitude of saints shouted *salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb;* Rev. vii. 3, 9, 10. So when the seventh angel sounded, there were great voices in heaven, saying, *the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever; and the four-and-twenty elders fell upon their faces*, and worshipped and gave thanks; *Rev.* xi. 15, 16. Again, when the old dragon and his angels were cast out of heaven, there was a loud voice, saying, *now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down;* Rev. xii. 9, 10. So upon the fall of Babylon, chap. xiv. and the victory of the saints, chap. xv. and the final destruction of antichrist, chap. xix. there are new honours done by the saints to God the Father, and his Son Jesus. There are new songs addressed to them at these surprising revolutions on earth, these wondrous turns of judgment on the world, and mercy to the church; all which supposes that the heavenly inhabitants are acquainted with them, and thus their knowledge and their joys increase.

Objection. But does not the prophet Isaiah say, in the name of the church of Israel, Abraham is *ignorant of us*, and Israel *acknowledges us not?* Isaiah lxiii. 16.

Answer 1. The words knowledge and acknowledgment often signify a friendly and beneficial care manifested in special acts of kindness and benefits conferred. Therefore the tribe of Levi is said neither to have seen his father or his mother, *nor to acknowledge his brethren, nor to know his own children;* Deut. xxxiii. 9. because the sons of Levi slew every man his brother, and every man his neighbour, to execute the vengeance of the Lord upon them; *Exod.* xxxii. 26—29. So Abraham and Israel in heaven, in the same sense, know not their posterity on earth, when they approve of the anger of God let out upon them, and afford them no defence. This interpretation perfectly agrees with the context. But it does not follow, that Abraham and Israel were utterly unacquainted with all the greater events of providence towards the Jewish nation, though perhaps they might not know the lesser and more minute circumstances of their afflictions or their deliverances.

Answer 2. If we could suppose that the souls of the ancient patriarchs were ignorant

of the affairs of their posterity before the coming of the Messiah, yet since Christ in our nature now dwells in the midst of them, and has taken the book of divine counsels into his own hands, since the great God-man rules all things in the upper and lower worlds, it is not probable that Abraham and Israel are so ignorant of the affairs of the church as they were in the days of Isaiah.

And not only the greater and more extensive dispensations that attend the church on earth are made known to *the spirits of the just made perfect*, but even some lesser and particular concerns are very probably revealed to them also.

Is it not said, that when *one sinner* on earth *repents, there is joy among the angels in heaven?* Luke xv. 7, 10. For every such convert is a new trophy of divine grace. And when the spirits of the just in heaven shall, in successive seasons, behold one and another of their old relatives and acquaintance on earth entering in at the gates, and received into heaven, can we imagine there is no new joy amongst them? Do the pleasures of angels increase when they see a man brought into the state of grace, and shall not the souls of men testify their exultation and delight, when they see one of their fellow-souls, perhaps a dear and intimate friend, translated to the state of glory! Surely every increase of that happy world shall diffuse increasing joy through the holy ones that dwell in it: and those shall have the sweetest taste of this joy that had the dearest concern in it. Oh the transporting and celestial gratulations that pass between two souls of intimate endearment at their first meeting there!

The last argument that I shall use, and it is also the last instance I shall mention, wherein the knowledge and the pleasure of glorified saints must receive addition and improvement is, the great resurrection-day.

The spirits of men are formed on purpose for union with bodies, and if they could attain complete happiness in the highest degree without them, what need would there be of new-creating their bodies from the dust? Upon this supposition the resurrection itself must seem to be almost in vain. But it is evident, from the word of God, that *the spirits of the just*, with all the perfections that belong to a separate state, wait yet for greater perfection when their bodies shall be restored to them; for as they suffered pain and agony in the body, they shall have a recompence of pleasure too. *All the days of their appointed time they wait, till* this blessed *change shall come;* Job xiv. 14. *God shall call,* and the dust of the saints *shall answer;* God the Creator will *have a desire again to the work of his own hands*, verse 15. and the happy souls will have a desire to be rejoined to their old companions.

O glorious hour! O blessed meeting-time! A magnificent and divine spectacle, worthy to attract the eyes of all the creation! When the long-divided parts of human nature shall be united with unknown powers and glories! When these bodies shall be called out of their long dark dungeon, all fashioned anew, and all new dressed in immortality and sunbeams! When these spirits shall assume and animate their limbs again, exulting in new life and everlasting vigour!

Now can we suppose it possible that all this vast and amazing change shall be made by the conflagration of the earth and the lower heavens, by the awful and illustrious splendors and solemnities of the last judgment, by the bodies of millions of saints and sinners rising into a painful or joyful immortality, and yet no new ideas hereby communicated to the happy spirits; no increase of their knowledge, or improvement of their joys?

Shall the apostles and the prophets, the confessors and the martyrs, stand at the right

hand of Christ, and be owned and acknowledged by him with divine applause in the sight of the whole creation, and yet have no new transports of pleasure running through their souls? Shall they be absolved and approved by the voice of God, with thousands of applauding angels, in the face of heaven, earth, and hell, and all this without any advancement of their knowledge or their blessedness? Shall St. Paul meet the Thessalonian converts *in the presence of* his *Lord Jesus*, those souls who were once his labour and his hope, and shall they not at that day appear to be *his glory and his joy?* Does not he himself tell them so in his first epistle, chap. ii. verse 19, 20. And can we believe that he or they shall be disappointed? Shall that great apostle see the immense fruits of his labours, the large harvest of souls which he gathered from many provinces of Europe and Asia, all appearing at once in their robes of light and victory, and shall he feel no new inward exultations of spirit at such a sight? And doubtless many thousand souls, whom he never knew on earth, shall be made known to him at that day, and own their conversion to his sacred writings. And shall all this make no addition to his pleasures? The very mention of so absurd a doctrine refutes and condemns itself.

The saints at that day shall, as it were, be brought into a new world, *and he that sits upon the throne shall make all things new;* and as he crowns his happy followers with new and unknown blessings, so shall he receive the homage of new and unknown praises. This is *a new heaven* and *a new earth* indeed, beyond all our present apprehensions; and the magnificent language of prophecy shall be fulfilled in its utmost force and brightness.

Doubtless there are pleasures to be enjoyed by complete human nature, by imbodied souls, which a mere separate spirit is not capable of. Is it not part of the blessedness of human spirits to enjoy mutual society, and hold a pleasing correspondence with each other? But whatsoever be the means and methods of that correspondence in a separate state, surely it wants something of that complete pleasure and sensible intimacy which they shall be made partakers of, when they shall hold noble communion in their bodies raised from the dust, and refined from every weakness. Is it not the happiness of the saints in heaven to see their glorified Saviour? But even this sight is and must be incomplete, till they are endued with bodily organs again. What converse soever the spirits of the just have with the glorified man Jesus while they are absent from the body, yet I am persuaded it is not, nor can it be, so full and perfect in all respects as it shall be at the general resurrection. They cannot now see him face to face in the literal sense, and they wait for this exalted pleasure, this immediate beatific sight. Job himself yet waits, *though* the *worms* have *destroyed his body*, till that glorious hour when in his flesh he shall see God, *Job* xix. 26. even God his Redeemer, who *shall stand at the last day on the earth*, verse 25.

Not only all the saints on earth *who have received the first fruits of the Spirit wait for the adoption*, that is, *the redemption of the body*, Rom. viii. 23. but the saints in heaven also live there, waiting till the body be redeemed from the grave, and their adoption shall appear with illustrious evidence: Then they shall all look like the sons of God, like Jesus, the first beloved and the first born. The spirits above, how perfect soever they are in the joys of the separate state, yet wait for those endless scenes of unknown delight that shall succeed the resurrection.

And there is abundant reason for it to be drawn from the word of God; for the scripture speaks but very little concerning the blessedness of separate souls, in comparison of the frequent and large accounts of the glory and triumph that shall attend the sound of the last trumpet, and the great rising day. It is to this blessed hour that the apostles

in their writings are always directing the hope of the saints. They are ever pointing to this glorious morning, as the season when they shall receive their reward and their prize, their promised joy and their crown; as though all that they had received before in their state of separation were hardly to be named in comparison of that *more exceeding and eternal weight of* additional *glory*.

What new kinds of sensations shall entertain us in that day, what a rich variety of senses we shall enjoy, what well-appointed and immortal organs we shall be furnished with, instead of our present feeble eyes and ears, and what glorious and transporting objects shall surround us in those unknown worlds, and fill the enlarged powers of the soul with sensible as well as intellectual delights: These are wonders too sublime even for our present conjecture, and are all reserved in the counsels of God, to complete the final felicity of the saints. Thus we have made it appear, that the knowledge and joy that belongs to the spirits of the just made perfect, may admit of large increase.*

But can their holiness be increased too? Can perfect holiness receive any improvement?

I will not assert any thing in this matter, lest the manner of expression should offend weaker minds: But I desire leave to enquire, whether those who know most of God do not love him best? Whether those who have the brightest and fullest visions of him are not most transformed into his image, and made most nearly like to him? Now if the separate spirits in heaven are advanced to different degrees of divine knowledge, may they not in this sense have different degrees of holiness too? Is it not possible that one saint should love God more intensely than another, and be more impressed with his likeness as he beholds more of his beauty? Is it not possible that a soul shall grow in the strength and fervor of its love and zeal for God, and be more exactly assimilated to him as it gets nearer to God, and grows up into higher measures of acquaintance with him? Has not the angel Gabriel, the apostle Paul, and the glorified human nature of Christ in any respect more of holiness or love, or likeness to God, than the meanest saint or angel in heaven? Is not their sublimer knowledge and nearness to God attended with proportionable rays of divine sanctity and glory? Is not the divine image in these exalted saints more complete than in the very lowest? And yet we may boldly assert, that the meanest saint or angel there is so perfect in holiness, as to be free from all sin: There is nothing to be found in any spirit there contrary to the nature or the will of God. So a soul released from the body may perhaps grow in likeness and love to God perpetually, and yet it may have no sinful defects either in its love or conformity to God from the first moment of its entrance into heaven.

I shall first illustrate this by two similitudes, and then propose a rational and clear account of it in a way of argument.

When the distant morning sun shines on a piece of polished metal, the metal reflects the face of the sun in perfection, when the sun first rises on it. But the same instruments coming directly under the meridian sunbeams, shall reflect the same image brighter and warmer: And yet every moment of this reflection, from the morning to the highest noon, shall be perfect, that is, *without spot*, without *blemish*, and without defect. Such perhaps is the holiness of all the saints in heaven.

Or shall I rather borrow a similitude from scripture, and say, the holiness of the spirits

* There is a little treatise, called *The Future State, displaying the Progressive Knowledge of the Blessed in Heaven*, written by a country gentleman, published in 1683, wherein are many ingenious thoughts on this subject.

in heaven is compared to fine linen? *Rev.* xix. 8. The *fine linen clean and white is the righteousness of the saints*, τὰ δικαιώματα τῶν ἁγίων. Now, though a garment may be perfectly clean without the least spot or stain, yet fine linen may grow whiter hourly, as it is bleached by the constant influence of the heavens. So though every spirit be perfectly cleansed and purified from all sin and defilement, yet it is not impossible that the degrees of its grace and holiness, or conformity to God, may grow brighter, and much improve by nearer approaches to God, longer acquaintance with him, and the continued influences of his majesty and love.

Now let me propose a rational account of this matter to the consideration of those whose minds are raised above common prejudices.

The holiness of an innocent creature consists in attaining the knowledge of the nature and will of God, according to the utmost of its own present capacity, and the means of discovery which it enjoys, and in the various exercises of love to God in an exact proportion to its knowledge; or, to express it briefly, thus, an innocent creature is perfectly holy when it knows and loves God to the utmost reach of its present powers. If this be done, there is no sinful defect, no guilty imperfection; and yet there may be almost an infinite difference in the various degrees of power and capacity, of knowledge and love, amongst innocent spirits: One spirit may be formed capable of knowing much more of his Maker than another, and may be favoured with richer discoveries. Now if every new divine discovery raise an equal proportion of love in the soul, then it is possible that any soul might be perfectly holy at its first entrance into heaven, and yet may make sublime advances in holiness hourly.

Can we suppose that innocent Adam, at his very formation in paradise, knew all the wonders of divine wisdom and goodness that ever he was designed to attain had he lived sinless and immortal? And then can we believe, since his knowledge of his Maker's goodness and wisdom was to receive continual advances, that he should admire him no more, and love him no better, after a thousand years converse with him, than he did at his first creation? Now the case of the saints in heaven is much the same. The rule and measure of their duty is their knowledge, and the rule and measure of their knowledge is their own capacity, and their means of discovery. They never fall short of their duty, and therefore they have no sin: And thus their holiness may be every moment perfect, and yet perhaps every moment increasing, as their capacities are enlarged, and receive new discoveries through all the ages of their immortality.

Happy souls, whose aspiring knowledge, and love, and zeal, move onward hourly, and get still nigher to their God! Surely while they *behold his face* in the unveiled beauties of his holiness, they shall love him with warmer zeal, and *be* more abundantly *satisfied with his likeness*; Psalm xvii. 15.

After all that I have said on this subject, some will insist on this objection, *viz.* Can there be any such thing as imperfection in heaven? Is it not said to be a perfect state? Now if the spirits above be always growing in excellency and holiness, then they are always defective, and eternally imperfect; which is very hard to suppose concerning the saints in glory, and contrary to the very expression and letter of my text.

The answer to this is very easy to all that will give their reason leave to exercise itself upon just ideas, and to think and argue beyond the chime of words.

Perfection, as I told you before, is not to be taken here in an absolute, but in a comparative sense. Nothing is absolutely perfect but God; and, in comparison of God, the

highest and most exalted of all creatures is, and will be, eternally imperfect and defective: *The heavens are not pure in his sight, and he charges his angels with folly;* Job iv. 18. Even the man Christ Jesus shall for ever fall short of the perfection of the divine nature to which he is united, and in this sense will be imperfect for ever. But where any creature has attained to such exalted degrees of excellency as are far superior to what others have attained, it is the custom of the scripture to call them perfect, and that with a design to do honour to their character: So Noah *was a just man, and perfect in his generation;* Gen. vi. 9. Job also has this honour done him, he was *perfect and upright;* Job i. 1. And the saints on earth are called perfect in many parts of the word of God, even while they are here on earth, and have many defects and imperfections. So, though it be literally true that the saints in heaven are continually imperfect in comparison of God and Christ, and of what they themselves shall farther attain, yet the scripture, which delights to do honour to them, chooses rather to call them perfect, because of the sublime degree of excellencies they possess above their fellow-saints on earth: And it is not fit for us to degrade them in our common language by the diminishing and abasing names of defect and imperfection, though their present perfection and excellency admits of everlasting increase.

If any man, after he has read this treatise thus far, and has duly weighed all the former arguments, can see force enough in this last objection to baffle or destroy them all, or can find terror enough in the mere sound of the word imperfect to forbid his assent, I desire he may not be disturbed in the possession of his own sentiments, till the sweet and surprising sensations of ever-growing felicity convince him that heaven is a place of glorious improvement.

This shall suffice for the third general head of my discourse, wherein I have shewn, that the perfection of the spirits of the just is such a perfection as admits of a rich variety of employments and pleasures, according to the various taste and inclination of the blessed; it allows of their different degrees of felicity, according to their different capacities and preparations: It furnishes each blessed spirit with a frequent change of pleasures, and it gives room for perpetual increase.

SECTION V.

OF THE MEANS OF ATTAINING THIS PERFECTION.

My *fourth* and last enquiry is this, how do these good spirits of just men arrive at this perfection? I answer, by the death of the body, and their departure from flesh and blood. You will ask, what reasons are there why their departure from the body should bring them into this perfect state? I will content myself to mention these four:

I. Because at death their state of trial is ended, and the time of recompence begins by divine appointment: Now all their imperfections must end with their state of trial.

This is the account of things in the scripture, Heb. ix. 27. *It is appointed for all men once to die, and after death the judgment.* At the hour of death those words are spoken aloud in the most dreadful or most delightful language, Rev. xxii. 11. *He that is unjust or filthy, let him be so still: He that is righteous* and holy, *let him be so still.* And then upon the determination of the state, the reward or recompence follows, verse 12. *My reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be.* Many inconve-

niences and imperfections, and difficulties, are proper for a state of trial, and by these methods we are trained up for glory. Christ himself was ignorant of many things in the day of his trial; his knowledge on earth was imperfect, and his joys were so too; for he grew in wisdom and knowledge, *he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. Though he were a Son, yet he learned obedience by the things that he suffered,* and *the Captain of our Salvation was made perfect through sufferings;* Heb. v. 8. and ii. 10. But when the time of probation and suffering ceases, then perfection is come, and glory appears.

Hail, blessed spirits above, who have passed your state of trial well! You have run the laborious race under many burdens, and you have received the prize. You have fought with mighty enemies, you have overcome a thousand difficulties, and you enjoy the crown. No more shall you complain of the mixture of error with your knowledge; no more shall you groan under the perplexities of thought, the tumults of passion, the burdens of indwelling iniquity, nor cry out because of oppressing enemies or sorrows. The hour of your trial is finished. You have been sincere and faithful in your imperfect services, and you are arrived at the world of perfection.

II. At the hour of death the spirits of the just leave all the natural and the sinful infirmities of flesh and blood behind them, which are the causes and springs of a thousand imperfections.

The very natural circumstances and necessities of the body, and the inconveniences that attend it in this frail state, do very much embarras and clog the spirit in its pursuit of knowledge, or holiness, or divine joy.

The flesh is a dark covering to the soul; it beclouds our ideas, confuses our conceptions, and prevents a clear and distinct knowledge of a thousand objects. It is a dull dark tabernacle for a spirit's residence. It has windows indeed to let in light, but those very windows, like painted or curled glass, too often discolour the objects, or distort the shape of them. These very senses of ours frequently impose upon us in the searches after truth, and represent things not as they are in themselves, and in their own nature, but as they are useful and hurtful to us; and often we pass a false judgment on the nature of things by their influence, and are led into many mistakes in our enquiries after knowledge.

Our fancy or imagination raises up false images of things, and we forsake the solid and real truth to follow the shapes, and colours, and appearances of it painted upon fancy. From our very infancy, our souls are imposed upon by the animal; we draw in early many false judgments, and establish them daily. We are nursed up in prejudice against a hundred truths, both in the philosophical, the moral, and the religious life; and it is the labour of an age even for a wise and good man to wear off a few of them, and to judge with any tolerable freedom, evidence, and certainty.

A great part of our life is spent in sleep, wherein the soul is bound up from exerting any regular thoughts, confined every night to a periodical delirium, subjected to all the fluttering tyranny of the animal spirits, and dragged away into all the wild wanderings of dreaming nature; and indeed the thoughts of many of us always, and of all of us sometimes, even when we are awake, are but little better, because we perpetually dance after the motions of passion and fancy, and our reason seldom judges without them. Alas! how imperfect is the best of us in knowledge here! But knowledge is not the only good of which the body deprives the spirit. The necessities of the body, hunger and thirst,

weakness and weariness, and drowsy spirits, sit very heavy upon the soul, and hinder it in the pursuit of holy and heavenly thoughts, break off many a divine meditation, and interrupt and spoil many a delightful piece of worship. In sickness or in old age, what long and weighty troubles, what tiresome infirmities clog the soul, and what restless pains of nature overwhelm the spirit, and forbid the lively exercises of devotion!

And then also the sinful appetites and perverse affections of nature are very much seated in flesh and blood; so much, that the apostle in many places calls the principles of sin by the general name of flesh. Read the latter end of the seventh chapter of his epistle to the Romans. How doth he complain of the flesh and members of the body, which are fatal instruments of sin and Satan! Read the black catalogue of iniquities, *Gal.* v. 19, 20, 21. and hear them called *the works of the flesh*. Pride and malice, and envy, and lust, and covetousness, and wrath, and revenge, are found secretly working in flesh and blood. Oh! how much are the springs of these sinful evils seated in the very composition of depraved animal nature! And how is the poor labouring spirit of a saint dreadfully betrayed thereby into frequent actual guilt, even notwithstanding all its care and watchfulness! *O wretched men that we are! who shall deliver us!* Blessed be God, there is a time of release.

And as our knowledge and our holiness are rendered very imperfect, by reason of these sensible and corrupt engines of flesh and blood, so are the joys and satisfactions of the soul perpetually impaired and diminished hereby. The heart of the saint is in pain to feel sin working in it, and the conscience complains under the anguish of guilt. Blessed be God for the balm that is found in the blood of Christ to ease the anguish of conscience! Besides, what spirit can enjoy perfect peace, while it is tied to so many thousand nerves, each of which may become an instrument of intense pain and torture? And the body itself has sharp humours enough in it to corrode those nerves, and fill the indwelling spirit with agonies. What millions of seeds of painful disease lurk in animal nature, that render this body a most uncomfortable dwelling! And how many thousand strokes and accidents are we liable to from abroad, whence new pains and sorrows are derived to the soul! The wind and the weather, the rain and the hail, and the scorching sun, the air, the water, and fire, and every element, may afflict the animal, and pain the unhappy spirit.

But O happy souls, that are free from all the cumbersome and mischievous influences of flesh and blood! from these instruments of iniquity, and springs of deadly guilt and torment! Happy souls, that are released from sick and languishing bodies, from feeble and burdensome limbs, and all the tiresome and painful disorders of dying nature! that are raised beyond the reach and injury of all these lower elements, these mediums of disease and pain! Rejoice and triumph, ye prisoners newly discharged; ye feel the pleasurable truths that we guess at, but ye feel and enjoy them with a relish of sublime pleasure beyond all our conjectures. Rejoice and exult in your new liberty, like a bird released from the imprisoning cage, and sing with sweetest notes to the praise of your Redeemer. O worship and serve him in the full freedom of all your active powers; attend at his feet with intense delight, and love him *with joy unspeakable, and full of glory*.

III. By the death of the body, and their release from it, these *spirits of the just* are free from all the tempting powers and the sinful influences of earth and hell.

This world of sensible allurements, and this world of sinful men, hath a mighty influence on the spirits of the saints while they dwell in flesh and blood. How often are we

deceived into practices of iniquity by the enticing vanities of this life? How often tempted by evil companions, by flattering mischiefs, and ensnaring circumstances? And many times too the fear of men, and the terror of their threatenings, fright us to a neglect of duty, or hurry us into the commission of some active iniquity. Sometimes the pleasing enjoyments of life tie our hearts to the creature by the bands of excessive love; and sometimes the injuries and reproaches we receive from them kindle our fiery passions, and rouze up our sinful wrath and revenge.

This world also is much under the evil influences of the prince of darkness; he is called *the God of this world:* It is greatly given up to the ravages of the roaring lion, and he worries the spirits of the saints while they dwell within his territories, though he is not suffered to destroy and devour them. But at the moment of death the happy spirit is released from the senses, and thereby from the impressions of all sensible things. All the flattering vanities of this lower world have no more power to entice the soul, than the grossest sensualities could entice a pure angel. Sinful companions can no more invite, and threatening tyrants have no more power to terrify.

The spirit is then got out of the territories of Satan; he is *prince of the power of the air*, but his dominion reaches no farther. The heaven where Christ is, never admits him. Michael *with his angels hath cast out the old dragon and his angels, and there is no more place found for them* there. Happy spirits, delivered and secured from the devil and the world at once, and from all their tempting and destructive influences!

Now when a sanctified soul is thus released both from its union to sinful flesh and blood, and from all possible assaults of the powers of earth and hell, it may be worth our enquiry, whether this release be not sufficient of itself to render the work of sanctification complete, and bring it to a state of perfection, supposing still the ordinary concurrence or influence of the sanctifying spirit? Or whether there must be any immediate, almighty and present change wrought in the soul by a new and extraordinary influence of the blessed Spirit at the very moment of death, by which sanctification is at once completed. Which of these is true I know not. I confess this last has generally been the opinion of our protestant writers; and perhaps it may be the truth: But the scripture is silent.

Who can tell therefore whether a holy soul, that hath received the divine seed of grace, which is called the *divine nature*, and is regenerated, and renewed, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, hath not all its remaining sins and imperfections owing to its bonds of sinful flesh and blood? And whether its compliance with so many temptations, is not to be attributed to its close attachments to corrupt animal nature and sensible things? And therefore whether this sanctified nature would not become completely free from sin, when it is freed from all the influence of a tempting body and a tempting world? Whether the divine bent and bias that is given it by the Spirit of God at first conversion, and by which it maintains continual opposition to sinful flesh, would not make its own way toward perfection without new and extraordinary operations? Whether this would not be sufficient to cause the soul for ever to ascend naturally toward God in desire, and love, and delight, when all clogs and embarrassments are removed? So a vessel filled with upper air, and dragged down by some heavy weight to the bottom of the sea, labours and wrestles with the uneasy burden, and hath a perpetual tendency toward this upper region: But if the weight be once taken off, it immediately of itself rises through the water, and never ceases its motion till it come to the surface.

I confess this is a nicer speculation, and of doubtful evidence; though when St. Paul lays his sinful compliances and captivity so much to the charge of his flesh and members in the vii. chapter to the Romans, and in other places of his writings, one would be ready to think St. Paul was of this opinion. However, this we are sure of, that a sanctified soul released from the body shall be made free from every sin, and its absence from flesh and the world have a large, if not a sufficient influence to effect this freedom. And if we should grant it, that a soul just dismissed from this world is not perfectly sanctified by the mere influence of this release; yet this perfection is sufficiently secured by its dismission from flesh; for *when absent from the body, it is present with* the Lord: And this leads me to the next particular, *viz.*

IV. At death *the spirits of the just*, released from bodies, enter into another state, a different world, where they have a thousand advantages for improvement in knowledge; and advances in holiness and joy, vastly beyond what any thing in this world could furnish them with.

They see God, and are for ever with him. They behold him face to face, as I have before explained it, in a more immediate and intuitive manner; and doubtless such a sight fills the spirit with a clearer and brighter idea of the nature and attributes of God, than all the former lessons it had learned in the books of nature and of scripture could ever give it.

They see our Lord Jesus Christ, our glorified Saviour, in such a way and manner as glorified separate spirits can converse with spirits imbodied; and one such view as this will perhaps lead us into more intimate acquaintance with his human nature and his united godhead, than many years of converse with him by all the mediums of ordinances, those divine glasses wherein *we see* him *darkly*, as the apostle speaks, and whereby God and Christ represent and manifest themselves to saints on earth.

And as our knowledge shall receive immense and surprizing improvements by these new methods of discovery, so I think it shall in due proportion advance our holiness or conformity to God the Father, and his brightest image Christ Jesus: for we cannot behold them in such a manner without a glorious transformation into their likeness, as I have hinted already.

When a soul, that hath a new nature given it by sanctifying grace, is placed in the immediate view and presence of God the most holy, it will ever be growing into a greater degree of nearness and love, and it will be powerfully changed more and more into the likeness of God himself, as a needle when placed within the reach of a loadstone's attractive power, ceases not its motion till it be joined in perfect union, and itself acquires the virtues of that wonderful mineral.

Nor is it possible in heaven that we should advance in knowledge and holiness without an equal improvement in felicity and joy. On earth indeed we are told, *he that will live godly, shall suffer persecution;* and *he that increases knowledge, increases sorrow;* 2 *Tim.* iii. 12. and *Eccles.* i. 18. *But as heaven is high above the earth,* so are the customs and the blessings of that state superior to this; for there are no present sorrows to be known, nor any future to be feared: And holiness has no enemy there. All things round the saint shall have a tendency to promote his blessedness.

The spirit of a good man released from the body, and ascending to heaven, is surrounded with thousands and ten thousands of blessed spirits of the human and angelic order: When it gets within the confines of the heavenly country, it sweetly and insensibly

acquires the genius and temper of the inhabitants; it breathes, as it were, a new air, and lives, and thinks, and acts just as they do. It shines and burns with new degrees of knowledge, zeal and love, and exults in the transporting communications of the same joy. How vastly shall our understandings be improved by the kind narratives and instructions of the saints that arrived at heaven before us, and by converse with the ministering angels.

You will say perhaps, that we shall have no need of their teaching when we get to heaven, for we shall be near to God himself, and receive all immediately from him.

But hath the scripture any where excluded the assistance of our fellow-spirits? God can teach us here on earth immediately by his own Spirit, without the use of books and letters, without the help of prophets and ministers, men of like passions with ourselves; and yet he chooses rather to do it in an instrumental way, and makes his creatures in the lower world the means of our instruction under the superior influence of his own Spirit: And why may he not use the same methods to communicate knowledge to the spirits that newly arrive at that upper world?

There we shall see the patriarchs of the old world, and prophets of the old dispensation, as well as the apostles and evangelists of Christ and his gospel. There we shall be conversant with those blessed angels whom he has used as ministers of his vengeance, or his mercy, to persons and churches, families and nations; and they will not be unwilling to inform us of those great and surprizing transactions of God with men.

There we shall find a multitude of other eminent saints before and after Christ.

Adam doubtless will take a peculiar pleasure in acquainting all his happy posterity with the special form and terms of the covenant of innocency; he shall tell us the nature of the trees of knowledge and of life, and how fatally he fell, to the ruin of his unborn offspring. Unhappy father, deriving iniquity and death down to his children! But with what immense satisfaction and everlasting surprize he views the second Adam, his Son and his Saviour, and stands in adoration and transport, while he beholds millions of his seed that he once ruined, now raised to superior glories above the promises of the law of works, by the intervening influence of a Mediator? Enoch, the man that *walked with God*, and Elijah, the great reformer, shall instruct us how they were translated to heaven, and passed into a blessed immortality without calling at the gates of death. Noah will relate to his sons among the blessed, what was the wickedness of the old world before the flood, that provoked God their Maker to drown them all: he shall entertain us with the wonders of the ark, and the covenant of the rainbow in all its glorious colours. Abraham *the father of the faithful*, and *the friend of God*, shall talk over again with us his familiar converse with God and angels in their frequent apparitions to him, and shall tell us how much the *promised seed* transcends all the poor low ideas he had of him in his obscure age of prophecy. For we cannot suppose that all intimate converse with our father Abraham shall be forbidden us, by any of the laws or manners of that heavenly country, since heaven itself is described by our sitting down as at one table with Abraham, and dwelling *in his bosom;* Matt. viii. 11. and Luke xiv. 15. and xvi. 23.

There Paul and Moses shall join together to give us an account of the jewish law, and read wondrous and entertaining lectures on the types and figures of that œconomy, and still lead our thoughts to the glorious antitype with surprizing encomiums of the blessed Jesus. Paul shall unfold to us the *dark* places of his own writings, better than

he himself once understood them; and Moses shall become an interpreter of his own law, who knew so little of the mystery and beauty of it on earth himself.

There we shall acquaint ourselves with some of the ancient fathers of the christian church, and the martyrs, those dying champions of the faith and honours of the christian name. These will recount the various providences of God to the church in their several ages, and shew the visions of St. John in the book of the Revelation, not in the morning twilight of prophecy, but as in the light of noon, as a public history, or as an evening rehearsal of the transactions of the day. The *witnesses* themselves shall tell us how they *prophesied in sackcloth*, and were slain by the man of sin; how *they rose from the dead in three days and a half*, and how the church was at last reformed from the popish mysteries of iniquity and superstition. Cranmer and Ridley, Calvin and Luther, and the rest of the pious reformers, shall make known to us the labours and sufferings of their age, and the wonders of pure christianity rising as it were out of the grave, and throwing off the chains, the darkness and defilements of Antichrist: And those holy souls who laboured in the reformation of Great-Britain, while they relate the transactions of their day, shall perhaps enquire and wonder why their successors put a stop to that blessed work, and have made no further progress in a hundred and fifty years.

Did one of the elders near the throne give notice to the apostle John concerning the martyrs; Rev. vii. 14. *These are they which came out of great tribulations, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb;* and shall we not suppose that the happy spirits above tell one another their victories over sin and temptation, and the powers of this world? Shall not the martyrs who triumphed in their own blood, and overcame Satan and Antichrist *by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony*, shall they not make it known to the inhabitants of the upper world, and tell it to the honour of Christ, their Captain and their King, how they fought, and died, and conquered? Methinks I hear these noble historians rehearsing their sacred tragedy; how they entertain a bright circle of listening angels and fellow-spirits with their own glorious and dreadful story, dreadful to suffer, and glorious to relate!

Shall it be objected here, that all the glorified saints cannot be supposed to maintain immediate discourse with those blessed ancients? Can those ancients be imagined to repeat the same stories perpetually afresh, to entertain every stranger that is newly arrived at heaven?

I answer, that since one single spirit, dwelling in flesh, can communicate his thoughts immediately to five or six thousand hearers at once by his voice, and to millions more successively by books and writings, it is very unreasonable to suppose, that spirits made perfect and glorified have not a power of communicating their thoughts to many more thousands by immediate converse; and it is past our reach to conceive what unknown methods may be in use amongst them, to transmit their ideas and narratives in a much swifter succession, than by books and writings, through all the courts of heaven, and to inform all the new comers, without putting each happy spirit to the everlasting labour of a tiresome repetition. Though every saint in heaven should not be admitted to immediate and speedy converse with these spirits of renown in past ages, yet doubtless these glorious minds have communicated their narratives, and the memoirs of their age, to thousands of that blessed world already, and from them we may receive a repetition of the same wonders with faithfulness and exact truth. History and chronology are no precarious and uncertain sciences in that country.

It is very probable indeed, that we shall have more intimate nearness to, and more familiar communion with those spirits that were of the same age and place with ourselves, and of the same church or family; for we can more delightfully expatiate in our converse with them about the same providences and the same methods of grace, and agreeably entertain and improve each other with notices of the affairs of the upper and lower worlds. Nor must we suppose such sort of historical converse among the blessed spirits is merely designed to fill the mind with new and strange ideas. This pleasure, considered by itself, is not sacred enough for the spirits of the just made perfect. There is not a narrative in the world, but shall disclose some wondrous instances of divine wisdom or mercy, power or faithfulness, patience and forgiveness, or wrath and justice. The speaker shall feel the workings of all proper reverence, zeal and love, and every hearer shall be impressed with correspondent affections, and join in adoration and holy wonder.

And while we speak of the means and advantages that glorified spirits enjoy for their improvement in all the parts of their felicity, surely we may expect the greatest and the best assistances, even those of the Holy Spirit, to render all these means more effectual. Is he not promised to *abide with us,* to *be in us,* and *dwell with us for ever?* John xiv. 16, 17. Is he not represented as dwelling in *the spirits of the just made perfect,* when it is said, *the Spirit that dwelleth in them shall raise their mortal bodies* from the dead? *Rom.* viii. 11. May we not then reasonably infer, that that glorious Spirit, who hath been our enlightener, our comforter, and our sanctifier on earth, will be our perpetual enlightener, our eternal sanctifier, and our everlasting comforter? *He that hath* so wonderfully *begun the* divine *work in us,* and laid foundations of joy in knowledge and holiness, *will he not finish and perfect* his own work, and add *the top-stone* to crown the heavenly building?

O blessed state of spirits discharged from the prison of flesh and this world! this wicked world, where *Satan* the evil spirit has so wide a range, and so poisonous an influence, and where sinful men swarm on every side, and bear the largest sway! What divine advantages are you possessed of, for the improvement of all your sacred excellencies and joys! When we can raise our thoughts a little, and survey your privileges, we feel somewhat of an inward wish to dwell among you, and send a breathing meditation, or a glance of warm desire towards your world and your society. We poor prisoner-spirits, when we hear such tidings from the country at which you are arrived, we stretch our wings a little, and are ready to wish for the flight. But God our sovereign must appoint the hour; he sees that we are not yet refined enough. Keep our souls, O Father, in this erect posture, looking, reaching, and longing for the celestial world, till thou hast completely prepared us for the promised glory, and then give us the joyful word of dismission.

Thus I have endeavoured to make it appear, on what accounts a dismission from the body is both the season when, and the means whereby *the spirits of the just* arrive at this perfection. Their state of trial is ended at death, and therefore all inconveniences and imperfections must cease by divine appointment: By death the soul is released from all the troublesome and tempting influences of flesh and blood; it is delivered from this sinful world, it is got beyond the reach of Satan the tempter and the tormenter: and it is surrounded with a thousand advantages for improvement in knowledge, holiness, and joy,

SECTION VI.

REMARKS ON THE FOREGOING DISCOURSE.

I. Are the *spirits of the just made perfect* at the death of the body? Then we may be assured that they neither die nor sleep; for sleep and death are both inconsistent with this state of perfection which I have described. The dead saints are not lost nor extinct. They are not perished out of God's world, though they are gone from ours. They are no more in the world that is enlightened by the sun and moon, and the glimmering stars; but they themselves shine gloriously, like stars of different magnitude, in the world where *there is no sun, nor* is there any *need of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God enlightens it, and the Lamb is the everlasting light thereof;* Rev. xxi. 23. They are lost from earth, but they are found in heaven. They are dead to us at present, but they are alive to God their Father, and to Jesus their Saviour; they are alive to the holy angels, and all their fellow-saints in that upper world.

If there had been any such thing as a soul sleeping or dying, our Saviour would never have argued thus with the Sadducees, *Luke* xx. 37, 38. nor have proved the doctrine of the resurrection from the doctrine of the separate state of souls. It is as if he had said, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are dead long ago; but God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob still. Now *God is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living;* therefore the souls of those patriarchs are yet alive, *for* they *all live to God* in the separate state, and they shall appear in their complete human nature, soul and body, at the resurrection. This is the language and the force of our Saviour's argument, and therefore I must believe the soul of Abraham is alive now.

When Jesus promises the penitent thief upon the cross, Luke xxiii. 43. *This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise,* can we persuade ourselves that he intended no more than that the thief should be with him in the grave, or in a state of indolence and insensibility? Does he not assure him in these words, that there is a state of happiness for spirits dismissed from the body, whither the soul of our Lord Jesus was going, and where the dying penitent should find him? So when the infidel Jews stoned Stephen the first martyr, *Acts* vii. 59. while he expressed his faith and hope in these words, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,* was this spirit of his to be laid asleep till the resurrection? Can we suppose the dying saint would have made such a request upon so lethargic a principle, and in the view of such a stupid state? No, surely; for he expected, and desired, and prayed to be received to dwell where Christ is, and to behold that glory which he had a glimpse of in the agonies of death.

Would the apostle Paul have been so willing *to be absent from the body,* where he did much service for his Saviour, if he had not a joyful view of being *present with the Lord?* As he expresses it, 2 *Cor.* v. 8. What doth he mean by this blessed language of presence with the Lord, if his soul was to lie asleep in a senseless and inactive state, till the second coming of Jesus? Or would he have told the *Philippians,* chap. i. verse 23. *that he had a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better,* if he had hoped for no advantage for his spirit by it, but a mere stupid indolence and rest in the silent grave?

Besides, we are told of rebellious *spirits* that are *in prison;* 1 Pet. iii. 19, 20. and of

Sodom and Gomorrah suffering the vengeance of eternal fire; Jude, verse 7. Whether this be material fire, or merely a metaphor to express torment, is not necessary to enquire here: But surely we can never imagine that the justice of God has provided the prison of hell and fiery torments for the souls of the wicked, separate from bodies, and yet that the mercy and goodness of God has provided no heaven of happiness for the spirits of those that have loved, honoured, and obeyed him all the days they dwelt in the flesh. There is then, there is certainly a state of happiness prepared for holy souls immediately after death.

When we think of our pious friends departed, our foolish imagination is too ready to indulge and improve our sorrow. We sit solitary in the parlour and the chamber, we miss them there, and we cry, "They are lost." We retire melancholy to the closet, and bewail a lost father, or lost mother, or perhaps a nearer and dearer relative. We miss them in our daily conversation, we miss them in all their friendly offices, and their endearing sensible characters, and we are ready to say again, "Alas! they are lost." This is the language of flesh and blood, of sense and fancy. Come, let our faith teach us to think and speak of them under a more cheerful and a juster representation: They are not utterly lost, for they are present with Christ and with God. They are departed our world, where all things are imperfect, to those upper regions where light and perfection dwell. They have left their offices and stations here among us, but they are employed in a far diviner manner, and have new stations and nobler offices on high. Their places on earth indeed know them no more, but their places in heaven knew them well, even those glorious mansions that were prepared for them from the foundation of the world. Their place is empty in the earthly sanctuary, and in the days of solemn assembly, but they appear above in the heavenly Jerusalem as fair *pillars* and ornaments *in the temple of God* on high, and shall for ever dwell with him there.

It is a very natural enquiry now, but where are these places of blessed spirits? What part of the creation is it, in which they have their residence: Is it above or below the sun? Is their habitation in any of the planetary or starry worlds? Or are they fled beyond them all? Where is the proper place of their presence?

Let me propose a brief answer to these curious questions in a few propositions.

1. The chief properties of spirits are knowledge and activity; and they are said to be present there, where they have an immediate perception of any thing, and where they lay out their immediate activity or influence. So our souls are said to be present with our bodies, because they have immediate consciousness or knowledge of what relates to the body, and they move it, and act upon it, or influence it, in an immediate manner.

2. God, the infinite Spirit, has an immediate and universal presence; that is, he is immediately conscious of and acquainted with every thing that passes in all the known and unknown parts of the creation, and by his preserving and governing power manages all things. Wheresoever he displays his glory to separate spirits, that is heaven; and where he exerts his vengeance, that is hell.

3. Finite spirits have not such an immediate and universal presence. Their knowledge and their activity are confined to certain parts of the creation: And wheresoever they are, if they are under the immediate influences of divine glory, they are in heaven; if of his vengeance, they are in hell.

4. They are usually represented as having some relation to a particular place or places;

because while we dwell in flesh and blood, we know not how to conceive of their presence so well in any other way; and therefore they may be described in scripture, or in common discourse, as being in heaven, and above the heavens, and *in the third heaven*, and as coming down to earth, &c. according as they are supposed to put forth any actions there, or to have an immediate cognizance of things that are done in those places; for the chief notion we have of the presence of spirits, is their immediate consciousness, and their immediate agency.

5. But if they are provided with any subtile ethereal bodies, which are called vehicles, in and by which they act as soon as they leave flesh and blood, then they may properly be said to reside in those places where their vehicles are, even as our souls at present are said to be in a room, or a closet, or a field, because our bodies are there, in and by which they act.

6. There must be some place where the glorified body of Christ is, and the souls of departed saints are, in some sense, with him. There Enoch and Elijah are in their immortal bodies, and other saints who rose at the resurrection of Christ. They may be, for ought we know, in or among some of the planets, or amongst the stars, though the distance of the stars is so prodigious and amazing, according to the exactest calculations of the new philosophy, that if the motion of a spirit or glorified body were no swifter than that of a cannon-bullet, they would not get so far as the stars in a thousand ages; nor would the journey of so swift a traveller to any of the planets, except the moon, cost less than the labour of several years.

7. These things are so puzzling to our reason, so confound our imagination, and so far transcend the reach of our present faculties to enquire and determine, that it is sufficient for us to know and believe, that *the spirits of the just made perfect* have an existence under the blissful influences of the grace and glory of God. And though we freely speak of them, and the scripture leads us to conceive of them, as dwelling in a world of light, and in some special place of magnificence and apartments of glory, or as moving from one place to another, yet perhaps it is to be understood chiefly in condescension to the weakness of our present capacities, or in relation to vehicles to which they may be united. But our ignorance in these matters shall be no hinderance to our arrival at heaven, if we tread the paths of faith and holiness, though we know not in what part of the creation it lies. I proceed to the second remark.

II. If all the spirits of the just that depart from this world are made perfect, then there is much better company above than there is below. The society in heaven is much more agreeable than the best society on earth.

Here we meet with a multitude of sinners; they are ready to mingle in all the affairs of life, and sometimes hypocrites join with us in the sacred ordinances of the sanctuary. The apostle himself hath told us, that in the civil concerns of this life we cannot avoid them; for if we will keep no company with sinners, we must have nothing to do in this world, *we must needs go out of it;* 1 Cor. v. 10. But in the world above there are nothing but saints; no inhabitant there but what is holy. There are no persons there that will tempt or defile us, or lead us astray from the paths of purity or peace. *Holiness to the Lord* is inscribed on every soul there; nor is there one *Canaanite in that* upper *house of the Lord of* hosts; *Zech.* xiv. 21.

But this is not all. For there are many of the saints themselves here on earth, that make but very indifferent companions. Some of them are shamefully ignorant, impru-

dent and foolish; and we have much ado to bear with their folly. Some of them are morose and contentious, captious and peevish, envious and censorious, and ready to take offence on the slightest occasions; a look or a smile placed wrong shall disoblige them, a mistaken word shall affront them for a month, and it is very hard work to humour and please them: Or we ourselves perhaps are foolish and imprudent, we are peevish and resenting, and our fellow-christians have as much to do to bear with us or to please us. There are some persons, concerning whom we have reason to hope, that their hearts in the main are right with God, but either by the iniquity of their animal natures, or the power of their temptations, they look so like the men of this world, that it is hard to distinguish them, and their society is dangerous, or at least very unprofitable and undesirable. Some of us fall into gross mistakes, and lead our friends into error, and hand in hand we forsake the truth. Some of us are melancholy, and sit in darkness; then we spread a gloom and heaviness over all our conversation, and banish all the joys of earth and heaven; or at best it may be, and in our sprightly days, we fill up the visiting hour with trifles and impertinences, and there is little of heavenly and divine conversation among us. Poor low grovelling subjects furnish our tongues, and entertain our ears, because we are so very imperfect here on earth in knowledge, in holiness, or in divine joy.

But what a glorious difference is there in the society above, where we may be secure from all mistake and falsehood, from all impertinence and folly in the longest discourse or conference! for every spirit there is so perfect in knowledge as to be free from error, and has so divine a turn of mind, that nothing relishes but what is holy and heavenly. No quarrels, no complaints are found there to embitter our converse, to diminish the pleasure of society, or to draw the heart away from God.

If we would know what the society of heaven is, let us renew the memory of the wisest and holiest, the kindest and the best companions that we were ever acquainted with here on earth; let us recollect the most pleasing hours that we ever enjoyed in their society; let us divest them of all their mistakes and weaknesses, of all their sins and imperfections; and then by faith and hope let us divest ourselves of all our own guilt and follies too; let us fancy ourselves engaged with them in delightful discourse on the most divine and most affecting subjects, and our hearts mutually raising each other near to God, and communicating mutual joys. This is the state of the blessed, this the conversation of heaven, this and more than this shall be our entertainment when we arrive at those happy regions.

This thought would very naturally lead me to the mention of our honoured and departed friend, but I withhold myself a little, and must detain your expectation till I have made a remark or two more.

III. Are the spirits of the just, who are departed from earth, *made perfect* in heaven; then they are not the proper subjects for our perpetual sorrows and endless complaints. Let us moderate our grief, therefore, for that very providence that has fixed them in perfect holiness and joy.

We lament their absence, and our loss indeed is great; but the spirit of christian friendship should teach us to rejoice in their exaltation. Is it no pleasure to think of them as released from all the bonds of infirm nature, from pains of mortality, and the disquietudes of a sinful world? Is it not better to lift our eyes upward, and view a parent or a beloved friend adorned with perfect grace and complete in glory, exulting in the ful-

ness of joy near the throne of God, than to behold him labouring under the tiresome disorders of old age, groaning under the anguish and torment of acute distempers, and striving with the troublesome attendants of this sinful and painful state? Do we profess fondness and affection for those that are gone, and shall we not please ourselves a little in their happiness, or at least abate our mourning? Doth not St. Paul tell the Corinthians, this is what *we wish, even your perfection?* 2 Cor. xiii. 9. and should not saints in the lower world take some satisfaction when a fellow-saint is arrived at the sum of his own wishes, even perfect holiness and joy on high?

But I correct myself here; nature must have its way and be indulged a little; let it express its sensible pain at the loss of such endearments. A long separation from those who are so near akin to us in flesh and blood, will touch the heart in a painful place, and awaken the tenderest springs of sorrow. The sluices must be allowed to be held open a little; nature seems to demand it as a debt to love, and grace does not utterly forbid it. When Lazarus died, Jesus *groaned and wept;* John xi. 33, 35. Yet let not sorrow triumph and reign, and like a flood break over all its bounds; rather give the stream of it a little diversion into a better channel. Come, let us take the advice which our blessed Saviour gives to the daughters of Jerusalem, who attended him to his cross with tears, Luke xxiii. 28. *Weep not for me, but* if you must *weep*, do it *for yourselves and your children;* because you are still left in the valley of sin and sorrow, while the saints departed are arrived at the land of peace, and their feet stand upon the mountains of paradise.

Could the voice of those blessed spirits made perfect reach our ears, we should hear them speak in the language of their Lord, "Weep not for us, but for yourselves; you are still encompassed with temptations and difficulties, we have surmounted them all: You are wrestling with many errors, and entangled in dark and noisy controversies; we are perfect in knowledge, and see divine mysteries in a divine light: You are labouring in the race; we are crowned, and have received the prize: You are striving in the field of battle, and we well remember the toilsome and painful conflict; we pity you, and call you rather to weep for yourselves than for us; we have finished all the war through divine grace, and are secure in the city of triumph: You are yet travelling through the valley of tears; we are refreshing ourselves in the gardens of pleasure, and on hills of everlasting gladness. Hold on with courage, and faith, and patience; there are mansions of joy prepared for you also, and we wait your happy arrival."

IV. Are *the spirits of just men* in heaven *made perfect* in the same excellencies and privileges which they possessed on earth? Then if our curiosity or our love has a mind to know what are the circumstances of our pious friends departed, or how they are employed above, let us review what they were here below, and how they employed themselves when they were with us; for, as I told you, in this life we are trained up for the life of glory: We shall then be advanced to a glorious and transcendent degree of the same graces; and there will be something in the future state of rewards answerable and correspondent to the present state of labour and trial.

This thought necessarily calls our meditations backward a little, to take a short survey of some peculiar characters of our excellent friend departed, that we may learn to rejoice in the present perfection of his graces and glories.

SECTION VII.

THE CHARACTER OF THE DECEASED.

When I name Sir John Hartopp, all that knew him will agree that I name a gentleman, a scholar, and a christian; and neither of these characters, in the best and most valuable sense of them, could forsake him at his entrance into heaven.

He shone with eminence among persons of birth and title * on earth; while his obliging deportment and affable temper rendered him easy of access to all his inferiors, and made him the delight of all his friends. Though he knew what was due to his quality in this world, yet he affected none of the grandeurs of life, but daily practised condescension and love, and secured the respect of all, without assuming a superior air. Then surely he carried this temper with him to the upper world, where gentleness and goodness reign in the highest perfection; and doubtless he practises now all the same graces of conversation among the blessed spirits there, but in a far superior manner, according to the unknown laws and customs of that region of light and love.

He had a taste for universal learning, and ingenious arts were his delight from his youth. He pursued knowledge in various forms, and was acquainted with many parts of human science. Mathematical speculations and practices were a favourite study with him in his younger years; and even to his old age he maintained his acquaintance with the motions of the heavenly bodies, and light and shade whereby time is measured. And may we not suppose that there are entertainments amongst the works of God on high to feast the spirits of such a genius? May they not in that upper region look down and survey the various contrivances of divine wisdom, which created all things in these lower worlds in number, weight, and measure? May not our exalted friend give glory there to his Maker, in the contemplation of the same heavenly bodies, though he dwells in the region where night and shadows are never known, and above the need or use of sunbeams.

But the book of God was his chief study and his divinest delight. His Bible lay before him night and day, and he was well acquainted with the writers that explained it best. He was desirous of seeing what the Spirit of God said to men in the original languages. For this end he commenced some acquaintance with Hebrew when he was more than fifty years old: And that he might be capable of judging of the true sense of any text in the New Testament, he kept his youthful knowledge of the Greek language in some measure even to the period of his life.

But earthly languages are of little use in heaven. There are too many defects and ambiguities in them to express the bright, the complete, and the distinct ideas of separate spirits. We may allow our learned friend, therefore, to be divested of these when he dropped mortality. Now he is out of the body, and *caught up to dwell* in paradise, where Saint Paul made heretofore a short visit, 2 *Cor.* xii. 2, 4. he hears and he speaks those *unspeakable words* it is not possible for a mortal tongue to utter. The things of heaven are not to be expressed in any foreign language.

* His grandfather, Sir Edward Hartopp, was created a baronet by King James I. 1619, which was but a few years after the first institution of that order.

Among the various themes of christian contemplation, he took peculiar pleasure in the doctrines of grace, in the display of the glories of the person of Christ, God in our nature, and the wondrous work of redemption by his cross. He adored him as his Lord and his God: And while he trusted in his righteousness as the great Mediator, and beheld him as his crucified Saviour, he was ever zealous to maintain the honours due to his divine nature and Majesty. And we may be sure this is a study in which he is still engaged, and he spends the days of his eternity in the pleasurable contemplations of his glorified Redeemer, and the sacred mysteries of his cross, and his throne, *which things the angels desire to pry into.*

His practice in life was agreeable to his christian principles, for he knew that *the grace of God, that brings salvation to men, teaches them to deny all ungodliness, and to live sober, righteous and religious lives, that in all things they may adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour.* Now that this part of his character is continued and exalted in the region of the blessed spirits, is too evident to need any amplification or proof; for holiness in every part of it is made perfect there, and all under the sweet constraint of love. His conversation was pious and learned, ingenious and instructive: He was inquisitive into the affairs of the learned world, the progress of arts and sciences, the concerns of the nation, and the interest of the church of Christ: And upon all occasions was as ready to communicate as he was to enquire. What he knew of the things of God or man, he resolved not to know them only for himself, but for the benefit of all that had the honour of his acquaintance. There are many of his friends that will join with me to confess, how often we have departed from his company refreshed and advanced in some useful knowledge. And I cannot but reckon it among the blessings of heaven, when I review those five years of pleasure and improvement, which I spent in his family in my younger part of life; and I found much instruction myself, where I was called to be an instructor.

Nor can I think such enquiries and such communications as are suitable to the affairs of the upper world, are unpractised among the spirits of the just men made perfect there; for man is a sociable creature, and enjoys communion with his fellow-saints there, as well as with his Maker and his Saviour. Nor can the spirit of our honoured and departed friend be a stranger to the pleasures of society amongst his fellow-spirits in those blessed mansions.

His zeal for the welfare of his country, and of the church of Christ in it, carried him out to the most expensive and toilsome services in his younger and his middle age. He employed his time, his spirits, his interest and his riches, for the defence of this poor nation, when forty years ago it was in the utmost danger of popery and ruin.* And doubtless the spirits of the just in heaven are not utterly unacquainted with the affairs of the kingdom of Christ on earth. He rejoices and will rejoice among his fellow-saints, when happy tidings of the militant church, or of the religious interests of Great-Britain, are brought to the upper world by ministering angels. He waits there for the full accomplishment of all the promises of Christ to his church, when it shall be freed from sins and sorrows, from persecutions and all mixtures of superstition, and shall be presented to the Father, *a glorious church without spot or wrinkle,* in perfect beauty and joy.

* He was three times chosen representative in parliament for his county of Leicestershire, in those years when a sacred zeal for liberty and religion strove hard to bring in the bill of exclusion, to prevent the Duke of York, afterwards King James II. from inheriting the crown of England.

His doors were ever open, and his carriage always friendly and courteous to the ministers of the gospel, though they were distinguished among themselves by names of different parties: for he loved all that loved our Lord Jesus Christ *in sincerity*. He chose indeed to bear a part in constant public worship with the Protestant Dissenters, for he thought their practice more agreeable to the rules of the gospel: He joined himself in communion with one of their churches, which was under the pastoral care of the reverend Dr. John Owen, where he continued an honourable member under successive pastors till the day of his death. Nor was he ashamed to own and support that despised interest, nor to frequent those assemblies, when the spirit of persecution raged highest in the days of king Charles and king James the Second. He was a present refuge for the oppressed, and the special providence of God secured him and his friends from *the fury of the oppressor*. He was always a devout and diligent attendant on public ordinances till these last years of his life, when the infirmities of age growing upon him, confined him to his private retirements.

But if age confined him, death gave him a release. He is exalted now to the church in heaven, and has taken his place in that glorious assembly, where he worships among them before the throne: There he has no need to relieve his memory by the swiftness of his pen, which was his perpetual practice in the church on earth, and by which means he often entertained his family in the evening worship on the Lord's-day with excellent discourses; some of which he copied from the lips of some of the greatest preachers of the last age: There his unbodied spirit is able to sustain the sublimest raptures of devotion, which run through the worshippers in that heavenly state; though here on earth I have sometimes seen the pious pleasure too strong for him: And while he has been reading the things of God to his household, the devotion of his heart has broken through his eyes, has interrupted his voice, and commanded a sacred pause and silence.

He enjoyed an intimate friendship with that great and venerable man Dr. Owen, and this was mutually cultivated with zeal and delight on both sides, till death divided them. The world has already been acquainted, that it is to the pious industry of Sir John Hartopp, that we are indebted for many of those sermons and discourses of the Doctor's, which have been lately published in folio. A long and familiar acquaintance enabled him also to furnish many memoirs or matters of fact, toward that brief account of the Doctor's life, which is prefixed to that volume, though it was drawn up in the present form, with various enlargements, by another hand. Now can we suppose two such souls to have been so happily intimate on earth, and may we not imagine they found each other among the brighter spirits on high! May we not indulge ourselves to believe, that our late honoured friend hath been congratulated upon his arrival by that holy man that assisted to direct and lead him thither? Nor is it improbable that he has found other happy souls there, who were numbered among his pious acquaintance on earth. Shall I mention that excellent man, Sir Thomas Abney, who was his late forerunner to heaven, and had not finished two months there before Sir John Hartopp's arrival! Happy spirits! May I congratulate your meeting in the celestial regions? But the world and the churches mourn your absence; and the Protestant Dissenters lament the loss of two of their fairest ornaments and honours.

And is there not the same reason to believe, that our departed friend hath by this time renewed his sacred endearments with those kindred spirits, that were once related

to him in some of the nearest bonds of flesh and blood? There they rejoice together in unknown satisfaction, they wait and long for the arrival of those whom they left behind, and for whose immortal welfare they had a solicitous concern in the state of their mortality.

This thought opens my way to address the posterity, the kindred, and the friends of the deceased, in the fifth remark.

SECTION VIII.

AN ADDRESS TO THE FRIENDS AND RELATIVES OF THE DECEASED.

V. If the perfection of blessed spirits above consists in a glorious increase of those virtues and graces which were begun below, let us see to it then, that those graces and those virtue are begun in us here, or they will never be perfected in us hereafter. If our spirits have nothing of that divine righteousness wrought in them on earth, we can never be admitted into the company of the spirits of the righteous made perfect in heaven. It is an old saying among divines, but it is a most rational and a certain truth, that grace is glory begun, and glory is but grace perfected. The saints above have the same divine nature, the same sanctified inclinations, and are engaged in many of the same sacred employments with the saints below, but all in a superior degree, and in a more transcendent manner.

As for you, my friends, who have the happiness and honour to be descended from such parents, or to be nearly related to such saints, you have seen the virtues and graces, the exemplary character and piety of them who are gone before; you have had many bright and shining examples in your family; you are *the children of the blessed of the Lord*, and may you for ever be blessed with them! And in order to it, see that you are made like them now, that ye may *be followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises.* This is a proper season to examine yourselves, and call your souls to account in such language as this: My father, my mother, my honoured and superior kindred are gone to glory: Their graces are perfected, and are not mine begun? What, have I no evidences for heaven yet ready? no exercises of faith, of love, of repentance, of true holiness? Are they arrived at heaven, and am I not yet travelling in the same road?

They were convinced of sin, and the danger of eternal death, so as to give themselves no rest till they found salvation. Have I ever been convinced of the sin of my nature, and the guilt of my life? Have I beheld myself exposed to the anger of God, and in danger of everlasting misery, so as to cry out with myself, *What shall I do to be saved?*

They have seen Jesus the Son of God, the all-sufficient Saviour, and have committed their souls by humble faith into his hands, to obtain pardon for the sake of his atonement, to be justified through his righteousness, to be renewed and made holy by the grace of his Spirit, and to be preserved to eternal glory. Now what have I seen of the excellency, or all-sufficiency, or necessity of Christ as a Mediator? Have I been persuaded to trust in him for my acceptance with God, to give my soul up to him as my

guide, guard, and ruler, to be formed after his image, and to venture all my immortal concerns with him, to be brought safe to heaven? Have I ever received him as my Lord and my Saviour, under those condescending characters and offices which he sustains for a sinner's salvation? They have believed in him while he was unseen, and they loved him, *though they saw him not; they rejoiced in him as* their all, and they knew not how to live without him. How is it with my soul in this respect? Do I love Jesus the Lord? Is he the desire of my heart, and the delight of my life?

Though they were kept by the grace of God from the pollutions of the world, and upheld their unblemished character to the last, yet they found sin to be their most dangerous enemy; they have felt it bitter and painful to their souls, and they long groaned under it as their daily burden. What is my grief? what my chief sorrow? *Do I groan in this tabernacle being burdened,* because of this inward enemy? And do I long to be rid of it? Are my sinful affections like a pain at my heart, and do the workings of sin within me awaken my continual repentance? They maintained a sacred tenderness of conscience, and were afraid to indulge themselves in that company, in that practice, and in those liberties of life which have often proved a dangerons snare to souls. Now can I appeal to God, who sees my heart, that I am cautious and watchful against every snare, that I stand afar off from every temptation, and *abstain from all appearance of evil?*

They took sweet pleasure in retirement, in prayer, and other holy exercises: This was the refreshment of their hearts, and the throne of grace was their refuge under every distress and difficulty. Let me ask my heart, what is my pleasure, my inward delight? Do I find a sweet relish in devotion? And when outward troubles perplex me, do I make the mercy-seat my speedy and constant refuge? They lived upon their Bible, they counted the gospel their treasure, and the promises and the words of God written there, were more valuable to them than all their outward riches. But what is my life? What is my treasure? What is my hope? Do I count heaven and the gospel my chief inheritance? Do I converse much with my Bible, and find food and support there! Do I *look at things unseen and eternal,* and feed and rest upon the promised glories of another world, when I meet with disappointments here?

They had a large share of christian experience, a rich stock of divine and spiritual observations, by much converse with God and with their own souls. What have I got of this kind for the support of my soul? or are all these strange things to me? Believe me, my dear and honoured friends, these are matters of infinite importance; I am sure you will think so one day: And I trust and persuade myself, you think them so now. I cannot give myself leave to imagine that you put these thoughts far from you. Some of you have made it appear that they lie next your heart, and that your souls are deeply engaged in the ways of God and goodness. Oh that every one of you would give the same comfort and joy to your friends! Be not satisfied with a mere negative holiness, an unspotted character in the eyes of the world; but let the world know that you dare be religious, and profess universal piety in a degenerate age. Let those that honour the memory of your parents, and love your souls, rejoice in your public christianity. Let them know, that there are the foundations of heavenly glory laid within you all, and the blessed work begun on earth, that shall surely be made perfect among *the spirits of the just* in heaven.

And methinks I would not have you contented with the lowest seat there; but stir up yourselves to a most unwearied pursuit of holiness in the sublimer degrees of it. And thus labouring in the christian race, contend for some of the brighter prizes, some of the richer crowns of glory. Be not satisfied to sit at a great distance below your parents departed, even in the heavenly country: But strive with a holy ambition that you may come near them, that the whole family together may arrive at some superior degrees of blessedness. And oh may divine grace grant me the pleasure to be a witness to your exalted stations, and to worship and rejoice amongst you there! *Amen.*

THE WORLD TO COME;

OR,

DISCOURSES

ON THE

JOYS OR SORROWS OF DEPARTED SOULS AT DEATH,

AND THE

GLORY OR TERROR OF THE RESURRECTION.

WHERETO IS PREFIXED

AN ESSAY

TOWARD THE PROOF OF

A SEPARATE STATE OF SOULS AFTER DEATH.

THE PREFACE.

AMONG all the solemn and important things which relate to religion, there is nothing that strikes the soul of man with so much awe and solemnity, as the scenes of death, and the dreadful or delightful consequents which attend it. Who can think of entering into that unknown region, where spirits dwell, without the strongest impressions upon the mind arising from so strange a manner of existence? Who can take a survey of the resurrection of the millions of the dead, and of the tribunal of Christ, whence men and angels must receive their doom, without the most painful solicitude. "What will my sentence be?" Who can meditate on the intense and unmingled pleasure or pain in the world to come, without the most pathetic emotions of soul, since each of us must be determined to one of these states, and they are both of everlasting duration?

These are the things that touch the springs of every passion in the most sensible manner, and raise our hopes and our fears to their supreme exercise. These are the subjects, with which our blessed Saviour and his apostles frequently entertained their hearers, in order to persuade them to hearken and attend to the divine lessons, which they published amongst them. These were some of the sharpest weapons of their holy warfare, which entered into the inmost vitals of mankind, and pierced their consciences with the highest solicitude. These have been the happy means to awaken thousands of sinners, to flee from the wrath to come; and to allure and hasten them to enter into that glorious refuge, that is set before them in the gospel.

It is for the same reason, that I have selected a few discourses, on these arguments, out of my public ministry, to set them before the eyes of the world in a more public manner, that if possible, some thoughtless creatures might be rouzed out of their sinful slumbers, and might awake into a spiritual and eternal life, through the concurring influences of the blessed Spirit.

I am not willing to disappoint my readers, and therefore I would let them know beforehand, that they will find very little, in this book, to gratify their curiosity about the many questions relating to the invisible world, and the things, which God has not plainly revealed: Something of this kind, perhaps, may be found in "two Discourses of Death and Heaven," which I published long ago:* But, in the present discourses, I have very much neglected such curious enquiries. Nor will the ear, that has an itch for controversy, be much entertained here, for I have avoided matters of doubtful debate. Nor need the most zealous man of orthodoxy fear to be led astray into new and dangerous sentiments, if he will but take the plainest and most evident dictates of scripture for his direction into all truth.

My only design has been, to set the great and most momentous things of a future

* See Page 1, of this Volume.

world in the most convincing and affecting light, and to inforce them upon the conscience with all the fervour that such subjects demand and require. And may our blessed Redeemer, who reigns Lord of the invisible world, pronounce these words with a divine power, to the heart of every man, who shall either read, or hear them.

If this volume shall find any considerable acceptance among christians, there are several more discourses, on the same themes, lying by me, which may, in time, be communicated to the world.

The treatise, which is set as an introduction to this book, was printed several years ago, without the author's name, and there, in a short preface, represented to the reader these few reasons of its writing and publication, *viz.*

The principles of atheism and infidelity have prevailed so far upon our age, as to break in upon the sacred fences of virtue and piety, and to destroy the noblest and most effectual springs of true and vital religion; I mean those, which are contained in the blessed gospel. The doctrine of the resurrection of the body, and the consequent states of heaven and hell, is a guard and motive of divine force; but it is renounced by the enemies of our holy christianity: And should we give up the recompences of separate souls, while the deist denies the resurrection of the body, I fear, between both, we should sadly enfeeble and expose the cause of virtue, and leave it too naked and defenceless. The christian would have but one persuasive of this kind remaining, and the deist would have none at all.

It is necessary, therefore, to be upon our guard, and to establish every motive, that we can derive, either from reason or scripture, to secure religion in the world. The doctrine of the state of separate spirits, and the commencement of rewards and punishments immediately after death, is one of those sacred fences of virtue, which we borrow from scripture, and it is highly favoured by reason, and therefore it may not be unseasonable to publish such arguments, as may tend to the support of it.

In this second edition of this small treatise, I have added several paragraphs and pages, to defend the same doctrine, and the last section contains an answer to various new objections, which I had not met with when I first began to write on this subject. I hope it is set upon such a firm foundation of many scriptures, as cannot possibly be overturned, nor do I think it a very easy matter any way to evade the force of them. May the grace of God lead us on further into every truth, that tends to maintain and propagate faith and holiness. *Amen.*

Note, Where these discourses shall be used, as a religious service, in private families on Lord's-day evenings, each of them will afford a division near the middle, lest the service be made too long and tiresome.

1739.

AN

ESSAY

TOWARD A PROOF OF

A SEPARATE STATE OF SOULS BETWEEN DEATH AND THE RESURRECTION,

AND THE COMMENCEMENT OF

THE REWARDS OF VIRTUE AND VICE IMMEDIATELY AFTER DEATH.

SECTION I.

THE INTRODUCTION, OR PROPOSAL OF THE QUESTION, WITH A DISTINCTION OF THE PERSONS WHO OPPOSE IT.

IT is confessed, that the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, at the last day, and the everlasting joys, and the eternal sorrows, that shall succeed it, as they are described in the New Testament, are a very awful sanction to the gospel of Christ, and carry in them such principles of hope and terror, as should effectually discourage vice and irreligion, and become a powerful attractive to the practice of faith, and love, and universal holiness.

But so corrupt and perverse are the inclinations of men, in this fallen and degenerate world, and their passions are so much impressed and moved, by things that are present, or just at hand, that the joys of heaven, and the sorrows of hell, when set far beyond death and the grave, at some vast and unknown distance of time, would have but too little influence on their hearts and lives. And though these solemn and important events are never so certain in themselves, yet being looked upon as things a great way off, make too feeble an impression on the conscience, and their distance is much abused to give an indulgence to present sensualities. For this we have the testimony of our blessed Saviour himself; Matt. xxiv. 48. *The evil servant says, my Lord delays his coming; then he begins to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken:* And Solomon teaches us the same truth; Eccles. viii. 11. *Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily; therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.* And even the good servants, in this imperfect state, the sons of virtue and piety, may be too much allured to indulge sinful negligence, and yield to temptations too easily, when the terrors of another world are set so far off, and their hope of happiness is delayed so long. It is granted, indeed, that this sort of reasoning is very unjust; but so foolish are our natures, that we are too ready to take up with it, and to grow more remiss in the cause of religion.

Whereas, if it can be made to appear, from the word of God, that, at the moment of death, the soul enters into an unchangeable state, according to its character and conduct

here on earth, and that the recompences of vice and virtue are, in some measure, to begin immediately upon the end of our state of trial; and if, besides all this, there be a glorious and a dreadful resurrection to be expected, with eternal pain or eternal pleasure, both for soul and body, and that in a more intense degree, when the theatre of this world is shut up, and Christ Jesus appears to pronounce his public judgment on the world, then all those little subterfuges are precluded, which mankind would form to themselves, from the unknown distance of the day of recompence: Virtue will have a nearer and stronger guard placed about it, and piety will be attended with superior motives, if its initial rewards are near at hand, and shall commence as soon as this life expires; and the vicious and profane will be more effectually affrighted, if the hour of death must immediately consign them to a state of perpetual sorrows, and bitter anguish of conscience, without hope, and with a fearful expectation of yet greater sorrows and anguish.

I know what the opposers of the separate state reply here, *viz.* that the whole time from death, to the resurrection, is but as the sleep of a night, and the dead shall awake out of their graves, utterly ignorant and insensible of the long distance of time that hath passed since their death. One year, or one thousand years, will be the same thing to them; and therefore they should be as careful to prepare for the day of judgment, and the rewards that attend it, as they are for their entrance into the separate state of death, if there were any such state to receive them.

I grant, men should be so in reason and justice: But such is the weakness and folly of our natures, that men will not be so much influenced, nor alarmed by distant prospects, nor so solicitous to prepare for an event, which they suppose to be so very far off, as they would for the same event, if it commences as soon as ever this mortal life expires. The vicious man will indulge his sensualities, and lie down to sleep in death with this comfort, "I shall take my rest here for a hundred, or a thousand years, and, perhaps, in all that space my offences may be forgotten, or something may happen that I may escape; or, let the worst come that can come, I shall have a long sweet nap before my sorrows begin:" Thus the force of divine terrors are greatly enervated by this delay of punishment.

I will not undertake to determine, when the soul is dismissed from the body, whether there be any explicit divine sentence passed, concerning its eternal state of happiness or misery, according to its works in this life; or whether the pain or pleasure that belongs to the separate state, be not chiefly such as arises, by natural consequence, from a life of sin, or a life of holiness, and as being under the power of an approving or a condemning conscience: But it seems to me more probable, that, since *the spirit returns to God that gave it;* Eccles. xii. 7. *to God, the judge of all,* with whom the spirits of the just made perfect dwell; Heb. xii. 24. and since the spirit of a christian, when *absent from the body, is present with the Lord,* that is, Christ; 2 Cor. v. 8. I am more inclined to think, that there is some sort of judicial determination of this important point, either by God himself, or by Jesus Christ, into whose hands *he has committed all judgment;* John v. 22. *It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment;* Heb. ix. 27. whether immediate, or more distant, is not here expressly declared, though the immediate connexion of the words hardly gives room for seventeen hundred years to intervene. But if the solemn formalities of a judgment be delayed, yet the conscience of a separate spirit, reflecting on a holy, or a sinful life, is sufficient to begin a heaven, or a hell, immediately after death.

Amongst those, who delay the season of recompence till the resurrection, there are

some who suppose the soul to exist still, as a distinct being from the body, but to pass the whole interval of time in a state of stupor or sleep, being altogether unconscious and inactive. Others again imagine, that the soul itself has not a sufficient distinction from the body, to give it any proper existence when the body dies; but that its existence shall be renewed at the resurrection of the body, and then be made the subject of joy or pain, according to its behaviour in this mortal state.

I think there might be an effectual argument against each of these opinions, raised from the principles of philosophy: I shall just give a hint of them, and then proceed to search what scripture has revealed in this matter, which is of much greater importance to us, and will have a more powerful influence on the minds of christians.

I. Some imagine the soul of man to be his blood, or his breath, or a sort of vital flame, or refined air or vapour, or the composition and motion of the fluids and solids in the animal body. This they suppose to be the spring and principle of his intellectual life, and of all his thoughts and consciousness, as well as of his animal life. And though this soul of man dies together with the body, and has no manner of separate existence, or consciousness, yet, when his body is raised from the grave, they suppose this principle of consciousness is renewed again, and intellectual life is given him at the resurrection, as well as a new corporeal life.

But it should be considered, that this conscious or thinking principle having lost its existence for a season, it will be quite a new thing, or another creature at the resurrection; and the man will be properly another person, another "self," another I or "he:" And such a new conscious principle or person cannot properly be rewarded, or punished, for personal virtues or vices, of which itself cannot be conscious by any power of memory or reflection, and which were transacted in this mortal state by another distinct principle of consciousness. For if the conscious principle itself, or the thinking being, has ceased to exist, it is impossible that it should retain any memory of former actions, since itself began to be but in the moment of the resurrection. The doctrine of rewarding or punishing the same soul or intelligent nature, which did good or evil in this life, necessarily requires that the same soul, or intelligent nature, should have a continued and uninterrupted existence, that so the same conscious being, which did good or evil, may be rewarded or punished.

II. Those, who suppose the soul of man to have a real distinct existence when the body dies, but only to fall into a state of slumber, without consciousness or activity, must, I think, suppose this soul to be material; that is, an extended and solid substance.

If they suppose it to be inextended, or to have no parts or quantity, I confess I have no manner of idea of the existence, or possibility of such an inextended being, without consciousness or active power, nor do they pretend to have any such idea, as I ever heard, and therefore they generally grant it to be extended. But if they imagine the soul to be extended, it must either have something more of solidity or density than mere empty space, or it must be quite as unsolid and thin as space itself: Let us consider both these. If it be as thin and subtle as mere empty space, yet while it is active and conscious, I own it must have a proper existence; but if it once begin to sleep, and drop all consciousness and activity, I have no other idea of it, but the same which I have of empty space; and that I conceive to be mere nothing, though it impose upon us with the appearance of some sort of properties.

If they allow the soul to have any, the least, degree of density, above what belongs to empty space, this is solidity in the philosophic sense of the word, and then it is solid extension, which I call matter: and a material being may indeed be laid asleep; that is, it may cease to have any motion in its parts; but motion is not consciousness: And how either solid or unsolid extension, either space or matter, can have any consciousness or thought belonging to any part of it, or spread through the whole of it, I know not; or what any sort of extension can do toward thought or consciousness, I confess I understand not; nor can I frame any more an idea of it, than I can of a blue motion, or a sweet-smelling sound, or of fire, air, or water reasoning or rejoicing: and I do not affect to speak of things, or words, when I can form no correspondent ideas of what is spoken.

So far as I can judge, the soul of man, in its own nature, is nothing else but a conscious and active principle, subsisting by itself, made after the image of God, who is all conscious activity; and it is still the same being, whether it be united to an animal body, or separated from it. If the body die, the soul still exists an active and conscious power or principle, or being; and if it ceases to be conscious and active, I think it ceases to be; for I have no conception of what remains. Now if the conscious principle continue conscious after death, it will not be in a mere conscious indolence: The good man, and the wicked, will not have the same indolent existence. Virtue or vice, in the very temper of this being, when absent from matter or body, will become a pleasure or a pain to the conscience of a separate spirit.

I am well aware, that this is a subject, which has employed the thoughts of many philosophers, and I do but just intimate my own sentiments, without presuming to judge for others. But the defence or refutation of arguments, on this subject, would draw me into a field of philosophical discourse, which is very foreign to my present purpose: And, whether this reasoning stand or fall, it will have but very little influence on this controversy with the generality of christians, because it is a thing rather to be determined by the revelation of the word of God. I therefore drop this argument at once, and apply myself immediately to consider the proofs that may be drawn from scripture, for the soul's existence in a separate state after death, and before the resurrection.

SECTION II.

PROBABLE ARGUMENTS FOR THE SEPARATE STATE.

There are several places of scripture, in the Old Testament, as well as in the New, which may be most naturally and properly construed, to signify the existence of the soul in a separate state, after the body is dead; but since they do not carry with them such plain evidence, or forcible proof, and may possibly be interpreted to another sense, I shall not long insist upon them: however, it may not be amiss just to mention a few of them, and pass away.

Psalm lxxiii. 24, 26. *Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory: My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.* In these verses, *receiving to glory* seems immediately to follow a guidance through this world; and when the flesh and heart of the Psalmist should fail him in death, God continued to be his portion for ever, God would receive him to himself as such

a portion, and thereby he gave strength, or courage to his heart, even in a dying hour. It would be a very odd and unnatural exposition of this text, to interpret it only of the resurrection, thus, *thou sholt guide me, by thy counsel, through this life, and, after the long interval of some thousand years, thou wilt receive me to glory.*

Eccles. xii. 7. *Then shall the dust return to the earth, as it was, and the spirit to God that gave it.* It is confessed, the word *spirit*, in the Hebrew, is the same with *breath*, and is represented, in some places of scripture, as the spring of animal life to the body: Yet it is evident, in many other places, the word spirit signifies the conscious principle in man, or the intelligent being, which knows and reasons, perceives and acts. The scripture speaks of being *grieved in spirit;* Isaiah liv. 6. *of rejoicing in spirit;* Luke x. 21. *The spirit of a man knoweth the things of a man;* 1 Cor. ii. 11. *There is a spirit in man;* that is, a principle of understanding; *Job* xxxii. 8. And this spirit, both of the wicked and the righteous, at death, returns to God; *Eccles.* xii. 7. to God, who, as I hinted before, is the judge of all in the world of spirits, probably to be further determined and disposed of, as to its state of reward or punishment.

Isaiah lvii. 2. *The righteous is taken away from the evil to come, he shall enter into peace, they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.* The soul of every one, that walketh uprightly, shall, at death, enter into a state of peace, while their body rests in the bed of dust.

Luke ix. 30, 31. *And behold there talked with him,* that is, with Jesus, *two men, which were* Moses *and* Elias, *who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease, which he should accomplish at* Jerusalem. I grant it possible, that these might be but mere visions, which appeared to our blessed Saviour and his apostles: But it is a much more natural and obvious interpretation, to suppose, that the spirits of these two great men, whereof one was the institutor, and the other the reformer of the Jewish church, did really appear to Christ, who was the reformer of the world, and the institutor of the christain church, and converse with him about the important event of his death, and his return to heaven. Perhaps, the spirit of Elijah had his heavenly body with him there, since he never died, but was carried alive to heaven; but Moses gave up his soul, at the call of God, when no man was near him, and his body was buried by God himself. See 2 *Kings* ii. 11. and *Deut.* xxxiv. 1, 5, 6. and his spirit was probably made visible only by an assumed vehicle, for that purpose.

John v. 24. *Whoso heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life,—is passed from death to life;* John vi. 47, 50, 51. *This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever.* John xi. 26. *Whoso liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die:* To which may be added the words of Christ to the woman of Samaria; John iv. 14. *The water, that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.* 1 John v. 12. *He that hath the Son, hath life,* &c. The argument I draw from these scriptures is this. It is hardly to be supposed, that our Saviour, in this gospel, and John, in his first epistle, imitating him, should speak such strong language concerning eternal life, actually given to, and possessed by the believers of that day, if there must be an interruption of it by total death, or sleep, both of soul and body, for almost two thousand years, that is, till the resurrection.

Acts vii. 9. *And they stoned* Stephen, *calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus receive my spirit.* These who deny a separate state, suppose that Stephen here commits his

spirit, or principle of human life, into the hands or care of Christ, because the life of a saint is said to be *hid with Christ in God;* Col. iii. 3, 4. that he might restore it at the resurrection, and raise him to life again. But, I think, this is an unnatural force put upon these words, contrary to their most obvious meaning, if we consider the context: for Stephen here had a vision of the Son of man, or Christ Jesus, *standing at the right hand of God, and the glory of God near him;* see verses 55, 56. Whereupon Stephen, being conscious of the existence of Christ in that glorious state, desired that he would receive his spirit, and take it to dwell with him in his Father's house; not to lie and sleep in heaven, for there is no night there, but to behold the glory of Christ, according to the many promises that Christ had made to his disciples, that he *would go and prepare a place for them in his Father's house, and that they should be with him there to behold his glory;* John xiv. 3. and xvii. 24. which I shall have occasion to speak of afterward.

Rom. viii. 10, 11. *And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness;* that is, if Christ dwell in you, by the sanctifying influences of his Spirit, it is true indeed your body is mortal, and must die, because it is doomed to death, from the fall of Adam, on the account of sin, and because sinful principles still dwell in this fleshly body; but your soul or spirit is life, or, as some copies read ζῇ instead of ζωὴ, your spirit lives when the body is dead, and enjoys a life of happiness because of the righteousness imputed to you; that is, your *justification unto life;* Rom. v. 17, 18, 21. I know there are several other ways of construing the words of this verse by metaphors; but the plain and most natural antithesis, which appears here between the death of the body of a saint, because of sin or guilt, and the continuance of the spirit, or soul, in a life of peace, because of justification, or righteousness, and that even when the body is dead, gives a pretty clear proof, that this is the sense of the apostle. This is also further confirmed by the next verse, which promises the resurrection of the dead body in due time. *If the Spirit of him, that raised up Christ from the dead, dwell in you; he that raised up Christ from the dead,* that is, God the Father, *shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit, that dwelleth in you.* The spirit, or soul of the saint, lives without dying, because of its pardon of sin, and justification, and sanctification, in the tenth verse; and the body, not the spirit or soul, shall be quickened, or raised to life again, by the blessed Spirit of God, which dwells in the saints, verse 11.

2 Cor. v. 1, 2. "*For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house, which is from heaven.* Verse 4. *We, in this tabernacle, groan, being burdened, not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.*" It is evident, that this house from heaven, this building of God, is something, which is like the clothing of a soul divested of this earthly tabernacle, verses 1, 2. or it is the clothing of the whole person, body and soul, which would abrogate the state of *mortality*, and *swallow* it *up in life*, verse 4. For though in verse 4. the apostle supposes, that the soul doth not desire the death of the body, or that itself *should be unclothed*, and, therefore, he would rather choose to have this state of blessed immortality superinduced on his body and soul, at once, without dying, yet, in the first verse, he plainly means such a house in, or from heaven, or such a clothing, which may come upon the soul immediately, as soon as the earthly house, or tabernacle of his body, is dissolved. And how dubious soever this may appear to those, who read the chapter only thus far, yet the eighth verse, which supposes good men to be

present with Christ, when absent from the body, determines the sense of it, as I have explained it; of which hereafter.

Perhaps it is hard to determine, whether this superinduced clothing be like the shekinah, or visible glory, in which Christ, Moses, and Elias appeared at the transfiguration, and which some suppose to have belonged to Adam in innocency; or whether it signify only a state of happy immortality, superinduced, or brought in upon the departing soul at death, or upon the soul and body united, as in this life, and with which those saints shall be clothed, who are found alive at the coming of Christ, according to 1 *Cor.* xv. 52—54. which will not kill the body, but swallow up its mortal state in immortal life.

Let this matter, I say, be determined either way, yet the great point seems to be evident, even beyond probability, that there is a conscious being spoken of, which is very distinct from its tabernacle, or house, or clothing, and which exists still, whatever its clothing, or its dwelling be, or whether it be put off, or put on; and that when the earthly house, or vesture, is dissolved, or put off, the heavenly house, or clothing, is ready at hand to be put on immediately, to render the soul of the christian fit to be present with the Lord.

2 Cor. xii. 2, 3. "*I knew a man in* Christ, *above fourteen years ago, whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell, God knoweth: how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words.*" I grant this ecstacy of the apostle does not actually shew the existence of a separate state, after death, till the resurrection; yet it plainly manifests St. Paul's belief, that there might be such a state, and that the soul might be separated from the body, and might exist, and think, and know, and act in paradise, in a state of separation, and hear, and perhaps converse in the unspeakable language of that world, while it was absent from the body.

And, as I acknowledge, I am one of those persons, who do not believe, that the intellectual spirit, or mind of man, is the proper principle of animal life to the body, but that it is another distinct conscious being, that generally uses the body as a habitation, engine, or instrument, while its animal life remains; so I am of opinion it is a possible thing, for the intellectual spirit, in a miraculous manner, by the special order of God, to act, in a state of separation, without the death of the animal body, since the life of the body depends upon breath, and air, and the regular temper and motion of the solids and fluids of which it is composed.* And St. Paul seems here to be of the same mind, by his doubting, whether his spirit was in the body, or out of the body, while it was rapt into the third heaven, and enjoyed this vision, his body being yet alive.

* It would be thought, perhaps, a little foreign to my present purpose, if I should stay here to prove, that it is not the conscious principle in man that gives or maintains the animal life of his body. It is granted, that, according to the course of nature, and the general appointment of God therein, this conscious principle, or spirit, continues its communications with the body, while the body has animal life, or is capable of its natural motions, and able to obey the volitions of the spirit; and on this account, the union of a rational spirit to the body, and the animal life of the body, are often represented as one and the same thing.

But if we enter into a philosophical consideration of things we should remember that animals of every kind, in earth, air, and sea, and even the minutest insects, which swarm in millions, and worlds of them, which are invisible to the naked eye, have all an animal life, but no such conscious or thinking principle as is in man: And why may not the body of man have the same sort of animal life quite distinct from the conscious spirit?

Besides, if this conscious principle give life to the body, medicines and physicians, whose power reaches only to rectify the disordered solids or fluids of the body, would not be so necessary to preserve life, as an orator to persuade the spirit to continue in the body, and preserve its life. And, accordingly, we read of foreign ignorant nations, where the kindred persuade the dying person to live, and tarry with them, and not to forsake them; and, when the person is dead, they mourn and reprove him, "Why were you so unkind to leave and forsake us?" And indeed this conduct of those poor savages is a very natural inference from their supposition of the intelligent spirit giving animal life to the body.

Phil. i. 21. "*For me to live is* Christ, *and to die is gain*," The apostle, whilst he was here upon earth, spent his life in the service of Christ, and enjoyed many glorious communications from him. "*For him to live was* Christ." And, on this account, he was contented to continue here in life longer: yet he is well satisfied, that death would be an advantage or gain to him. Now we can hardly suppose, what gain it would be for St. Paul to die, if his soul immediately went to sleep, and became inactive and unconscious, while his body lay in the grave, and neither soul nor body could do any service for Christ, or receive any communications from him till the great rising-day. This text seems to carry the argument above a mere probability.

1 Thess. iv. 14. "*For if we believe, that* Jesus *died, and rose again, even so them also, which sleep in* Jesus, *will God bring with him.*" The most natural and evident sense of these words, is this, that when the man Jesus Christ, in whom dwells the fulness of the godhead, shall descend from heaven, in order to raise the dead bodies of those that died, or went to sleep in the faith of Christ, God dwelling in him will bring with him the souls of his saints, who were in paradise, down to earth, to be re-united to their bodies, when Jesus raises them from the dead, of which the apostle speaks in the sixth verse: This, I say, is the most natural and obvious sense; other paraphrases of the words seem strained and unnatural.

1 *Thess.* v. 10. "Jesus Christ, *who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.*" Sleep is the death of good men, in the language of the apostle, in chapter iv. verses 13—15. and sleep, in this verse, can neither signify natural sleep, as verse 7. nor spiritual sloth, as verse 6. therefore it must signify death here. Now they, who are *asleep in* Christ, in this sense, do still live together with him in their souls, and shall live with him in their bodies also, when raised from the dead. This exposition arises near to a certainty of evidence.

1 *Pet.* iii. 18—20. "Christ *was put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit, by which also he went, and preached unto the spirits in prison, which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah.*" I confess this is a text that has much puzzled interpreters, in what sense Christ may be said to go and preach to those ancient rebels, who were destroyed by the flood; whether he did it by his Spirit working in Noah, *the preacher of righteousness*, in those days; or whether in the three days in which the body of Christ lay dead, his soul visited the spirits of those rebels, in their separate state of imprisonment, on which some ground the notion of his descent into hell: But, let this be determined as it will, the most clear and easy sense of the apostle, when he speaks of the spirits in prison, is, that the souls of those rebels, after their bodies were destroyed by the flood, were reserved in prison for some special and future design: And this is very parallel to the present circumstances of fallen angels in Jude, verse 6. "*The angels, that kept not their first estate, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day:*" And why may not the spirits of men be as well kept in such a prison as angelic spirits?

Jude, verse 7. "Sodom *and* Gomorrah *are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.*" It is evident, that the material fire, which destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, was not eternal; for a great lake of water quickly overflowed, and now covers all that plain where the fire was kindled, which burned down those cities. It is manifest also, that the day of resurrection, and future punishment, being not yet come, they do not, at this time, suffer the vengeance of eternal fire in their bodies: Nor can this verse, I

think, be well explained, to make Sodom and Gomorrah an example to deter present sinners from uncleanness, but by allowing, that the spirits of those lewd persons are now suffering a degree of vengeance, or punishment, from the justice of God, which is compared to that fire, whereby their cities and their bodies were burned, and which vengeance, at the last great day, shall continue their punishment, and pronounce it eternal, or kindle material fire, which shall never be quenched.

The last text I shall mention is; Rev. vi. 9. "*I saw under the altar, the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.*" I confess this is a book of visions, and this place, amongst others, might be explained as a mere vision of the apostle, if there were no other text which confirmed the doctrine of a separate state: But since, I think, there are some solid proofs of it in other parts of the New Testament, I know not why this may not be explained, at least, something nearer to the literal sense of it, than those will allow, who suppose the soul to sleep from death to the resurrection. Why may not the spirits of the martyrs, which are now with God, pray him to hasten the accomplishment of his promises made to his church, and the day of vengeance upon his irreconcileable enemies?

SECTION III.

SOME FIRMER OR MORE EVIDENT PROOFS OF A SEPARATE STATE.

I COME now to consider those texts, which do more expressly and certainly discover the separate state, and which I think cannot, with any tolerable appearance of reason, be turned aside from their plain and obvious intention, to reveal and declare, that there is a separate state of souls. And such, in my opinion, are these that follow.

I. Matt. x. 28. "*Fear not them, which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him, who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.*" Every common reader, as well as every man of learning, who reads this text with a sincere mind, and without prejudice, I think, will acknowledge at least, that the most obvious and easy sense of the words implies, that there is a soul in man, which men cannot kill, even though they kill the body.

It is to very little purpose for writers to say, that the greek word ψυχὴ, which we translate soul here, doth, in other places in scripture, and even in the 39th verse of this very chapter, signify life, and consequently here it may also signify the animal life, or the person of the man; for it is manifest, that, in this place, it must signify some immortal principle in man that cannot die; whereas, when the body is killed, the animal life dies too, and does not exist till the body is raised again: But the soul is a principle in this place which men cannot kill, even though they destroy the life of the body: And whatsoever other senses the word ψυχὴ may obtain in other texts, that cannot preclude such a sense of it in this text as is most usual in itself, and which the context makes necessary in this place.

Nor will it avail the supporters of the mortality of the soul to say, that this scripture means only, that men cannot kill the soul for ever, so that it shall for ever perish, and have no future life hereafter by a resurrection: for, in this sense, men cannot kill the body, so that it shall never revive, or rise again: But here is a plain distinction in the text, that the

body may be killed, but the soul cannot. And I think this scripture proves also, that, though the body may be laid to sleep in the grave, yet the soul cannot be laid to sleep; for the substance of the body still exists, and is not utterly destroyed by killing it, but only laid to sleep for a time, as the scripture often describes death: But the soul cannot be thus laid to sleep for a time, with its substance still existing, for that would be to have no pre-eminence above the body, which is contrary to this assertion of our Saviour.

II. Luke xvi. 22—28. "*The beggar died, and was carried by angels into* Abraham's *bosom. The rich man also died, and was buried, and in hell he lift up his eyes being in torments,—and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to my father's house,—that he may testify to my brethren, lest they come also into this place of torment.*" I grant, that this account of the rich man and the beggar is but a parable, and yet it may prove the existence of the rich man's soul, in a place of torment, before the resurrection of the body;

1. Because the existence of souls, in a separate state, whilst other men dwell here on earth, is the very foundation of the whole parable, and runs through the whole of it. The poor man died, and his soul was in paradise. The rich man's dead body was buried, and his soul was in hell, while his five brethren were here on earth, in a state of probation, and would not hearken to Moses and the prophets.

2. Because the very design of the parable is to shew, that a ghost sent from the other world, whether heaven or hell, to wicked men, who are here in a state of trial, will not be sufficient to convert them to holiness, if they reject the means of grace, and the ministers of the word. The very design of our Saviour seems to be lost, if there be no souls existing in a separate state. A ghost, sent from the other world, could never be supposed to have any influence to convert sinners in this world, even in a parable, if there were no such things as ghosts there. The rich man's five brethren could have no motive to hearken to a ghost, pretending to come from heaven or hell, if there were no such things as ghosts, or separate souls, either happy or miserable. Now, surely, if parables can prove any thing at all, they must prove these propositions, which are both the foundation and the design of the whole parable.

3. I might add yet further, that it is very strange, that our Saviour should so particularly speak of angels carrying the soul of a man, whose body was just dead, into heaven, or paradise, which he calls Abraham's bosom; if there were no such state, or place, as a heaven, for separate souls: if Abraham's soul had no residence there, no existence in that state; if angels had never any thing to do in such an office. What would the Jews have said, or thought of a prophet come from God, who had taught his doctrines to the people in such parables, as had scarce any sort of foundation in the reality, or nature of things.

But you will say, the Jews had such an opinion current among them, though it was a very false one, and that this was enough to support a parable: I answer, what could Christ, who is truth itself, have said more, or plainer, to confirm the Jews in this gross error of a separate state of souls, than to form a parable, which supposes this doctrine, in the very design and moral of it, as well as in the foundation and matter of it?

III. Luke xx. 37, 38. "*Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, for he is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto him.*" Some learned men suppose, that the controversy between Christ and the Sadducees, in this place, was about the "anastasis," which implies the whole state of existence after death, including both

the separate state and the resurrection, because the Sadducees denied both these at once, and believed, that death finished the whole existence of the man. They denied angels and spirits; *Acts* xxiii. 8. that is, separate souls of men, and thought the rewards and punishments, mentioned in scripture, related only to this life. Upon this account they suppose our Saviour's design is to prove the existence of persons or spirits in the separate state, as much as the resurrection of the body.

And when he says, that the Lord, or Jehovah, is described as the God of Abraham, &c. it supposes Abraham, at the same time, to have actually some life and existence, in some state or other, for *God is not a God of the dead, but of the living*, for all that are dead, and gone out of this world, still live unto God; that is, they have a present life in the invisible world of spirits, as God is an invisible spirit, as well as they expect a resurrection of their body in due time. How could God, in the days of Moses, be called actually the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who were long since dead, if there was no sense in which they were now alive to God, since our Saviour declares, God is properly the God only of the living, and not of the dead? This part of the argument holds good, in whatsoever sense you construe the whole debate, and by whatsoever medium or connexion you prove the doctrine of the resurrection of the body; and this is obvious to the honest and unlearned reader, as well as to the men of learning.

IV. Luke xxiii. 42, 43. And he, that is, the penitent thief upon the cross, said unto Jesus, *Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom: And Jesus said unto him, verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.* The thief upon the cross believed that Christ would enter into paradise, which he supposed to be Christ's kingdom, when he departed from this world, which was not his kingdom: And this he believed, partly according to the common sentiment of the Jews, concerning good men at their death, as well as it is agreeable to our Saviour's own expressions to God; *John* xvii. 11. *Holy Father, I am no more in the world, and I come unto thee:* or, as he said to his disciples; *John* xvi. 28. *I leave the world, and go to the Father.*

And, according to these expressions; *Luke* xxiii. 46. Christ dies with these words on his lips, *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.* Our Saviour taking notice of the repentance of the thief, acknowledging his own guilt, thus, *We are justly under this condemnation, and receive the due reward of our deeds*, and taking notice also of his faith in the Messiah, as a king whose kingdom was not of this world, when he prayed, *Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom:* Christ, I say, taking notice of both these, answers him with a promise of much grace, *Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.* The use of the word paradise in scripture and amongst ancient writers, Jewish and christian, is to signify the happiness of holy souls in a separate state: And our Saviour entering into that state, at his death, declared to the dying penitent, that he should be with him there immediately. It is certain that by the word paradise, St. Paul means the place of happy spirits, into which he was transported; 2 *Cor.* xii. 4. And this sense is very accommodate, and proper to this expression of our Saviour, and to the prayer of the penitent thief, and it is as suitable to the design of Christ, in his epistle to the church of Ephesus; *Rev.* ii. 7. *The tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God*, which are the only three places where the New Testament uses this word.

I know there have been great pains taken to shew that the stops should be altered,

and the comma should be placed after the word *to-day*, thus, *I say unto thee to-day, thou shalt be with me in paradise*, that is, some time or other hereafter. As though Christ meant no more than this, *viz.* " thou askest me to remember thee when I come into my kingdom: And I declare unto thee truly this very day, that some long time hereafter thou shalt be with me in happiness at thy resurrection, when my kingdom shall be just at an end, and I shall give it all up to the Father," as in 1 *Cor.* xv. 24. Can any one imagine this to be the meaning of our blessed Saviour, in answer to this prayer of the dying penitent? I know also there are other laborious criticisms to represent these words, *to-day*, in other places of scripture as referring to some distant time, and not to mean that very day of twenty-four hours: But rather than enter into a long and critical debate upon all those texts, I will venture to trust the sense of it in this place with any sincere and unlearned reader.

But, if we consult the learned, Dr. Whitby will tell us, that it was a familiar phrase of the Jews, to say on a just man's dying, *to-day shall he sit in the bosom of Abraham:* And, it was their common opinion, that the " souls of the righteous who were very eminent in piety, were carried immediately into paradise." The chaldee paraphrase on Solomon's Song, chapter iv. 12. takes some notice of the " souls of the just, who are carried into paradise by the hands of angels." Grotius, in his notes on *Luke* xxiii. 43. mentions the hearty and serious wish of the Jews, concerning their friends who are dead, in the language of the talmudical writers, " Let his soul be gathered to the garden of Eden:" And in their solemn prayers when one dies, " Let him have his portion in paradise, and also in the world to come," by which they mean the state of the resurrection, and plainly distinguished it from this immediate entrance into Eden or paradise at the hour of death. The Jews suppose Enoch to be carried to paradise even in his body; and that the souls of good men have no interruption of life? but that there was a " reward for blameless souls," as the book of Wisdom speaks, chapter ii. 22. " For God created man to be immortal, and to be an image of his own eternity," which seems to suppose blameless souls, entering into this reward without interruption of their life. And if this be the meaning of paradise among the Jews, doubtless our Saviour spake the words in such a known and common sense, in which the penitent thief would easily and presently understand him, it being a promise of grace in his dying hour, wherein he had no long time to study hard for the sense of it, or consult the critics in order to find the meaning.

We come now to consider the writings of St. Paul: And it is certain, that the most natural and obvious sense of his words in many places of his epistles, refers to a separate state of the souls after death: For as he was a pharisee in the sentiments of religion, so he seems to be something of a platonist in philosophy, so far as christianity admitted the same principles. Why then should it not be reasonably supposed, wheresoever he speaks of this subject, and speaks in their language too, that he means the same thing which the pharisees and the platonists believed, that is, the immortality and life of the soul in a separate state. But I proceed to the particular texts.

V. 2 *Cor.* v. 6, 8. *Therefore we are always confident, or of good courage, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord:* The apostle, verse 4. seems to wish that he might be clothed upon at once, with immortality in soul and body, without dying, or being unclothed: But since things are otherwise

determined, then in the next place, he would rather choose absence from the body, that he might be present with the Lord. These words seem to me so plain, so express, and so unanswerable a proof of the spirits of good men existing in a separate state, and being present with the Lord, when they are absent from the body, at death, that I could never meet but with two ways of evading it.

The first is what a gentleman many years ago, who professed christianity, acknowledged to me, *viz.* that he believed St. Paul did mean in this place, the same sense in which I have explained him; but he thought St. Paul might be mistaken in his opinion, for he was not of the apostle's mind in this point. I think I need not tarry to refute this answer: But I may make this remark upon it, *viz.* that the sense of St. Paul, concerning the separate state, was so evident in this place, that this man had rather differ from the apostle, than deny this to be his meaning. All his prejudices against this doctrine, could not hinder him from acknowledging that the apostle believed and taught it.

The second way of evading it is, that this text, with one or two others of like kind, do indeed speak of the happiness of souls in a separate state, but it doth refer only to the apostles themselves, who had this peculiar favour and privilege granted them by Christ, to follow him to paradise and enjoy his presence there, while the souls of other christians were asleep, unconscious and inactive till the resurrection.

Answer 1. It is granted indeed, that several verses of this chapter, as well as in the former, have a peculiar reference to the ministers of Christ, and perhaps to the apostles who were his ambassadors; but there are many things in both these chapters that are perfectly applicable to every christian; and the verses just before and just after this eighth verse may belong to all good men, as well as to the apostles or ministers. "*He that hath wrought us for the self same thing*, that is, for the happiness of the future state, *is God, who hath also given unto us the earnest of the Spirit*, at least as an enlightener and a sanctifier, if not as the author of special gifts," for Rom. viii. 9. *If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.* And verse 6. *Therefore we are always confident*, or of good courage, *knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight.* This is, or should be the character of every christian. And the ninth verse that follows it, belongs to all the saints: *Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him;* verse 10. *for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* Now why should we suppose, that St. Paul excludes all other christians besides himself, and his brethren the apostles, from the blessing of the eighth verse, *viz.* that when they *are absent from the body, they shall be present with the Lord*, since the verses all round it are applicable to all christians.

2. These chapters were written with a design, not only to vindicate and encourage the apostle himself, under the sufferings and reproaches which he met with, but, doubtless, to give encouragement to the Corinthians, and all christians, under any sufferings or reproaches they might meet with in the world; that, as he expresses it a little before, they might learn *to walk by faith*, and to look at the things, *which are unseen, which are eternal.* And indeed, if this peculiar blessing of the happiness of a separate state belongs only to the apostles, how much are the comforts of the New Testament narrowed and diminished, and the faith and hope of common christians discouraged and enervated,

and their motives to holiness weakened, when they are told, they have nothing to do to lay hold upon such promised favours, such revelations of grace, because they belong only to the apostles, and not to them?

And, indeed, how shall common christians ever know what part of the epistles they may apply to themselves, for their direction and consolation, if they may not hope in such words of grace, where the holy writers use the word *we*, and do not plainly intimate, that they belong to preachers or apostles only?

3. When our Saviour prays for himself and his apostles, in the beginning of the xvii. of St. John, he comes, in the 20th verse, to extend the blessings he had prayed for to all believers. Verse 20. *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also, which shall believe on me through their word:* Verse 21. *That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may be one in us, that the world may believe, that thou hast sent me.* Verse 24. *Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me.* Here it is evident, that our Saviour prays that those, that shall believe on him through the word of the apostles, may be present with him in his kingdom to behold his glory; and is not that a very considerable part of his glory, which the Father hath conferred upon him, to be Lord and King, and head of his church? But this peculiar glory reaches no further than the resurrection and judgment, and cannot be seen afterwards; for in 1 *Cor.* xv. 24. *Then cometh the end, and Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to God the Father:* verse 28. *The Son himself also shall be subject unto the Father, that God may be all in all.*

As for that final blaze of supreme glory, wherein Christ shall appear at the day of judgment, just before he resigns up his kingdom, and which, perhaps, is once called his kingdom; 2 Tim. iv. 1. when *he shall come in the glory of his Father, and of his holy angels, as well as his own;* Mark viii. 28. Luke ix. 26. the sight of it shall be public and common to all the world, and not any peculiar favour to the saints.

It seems, therefore, most probable, that it is only or chiefly in the separate state of souls departed, that the saints have a special promise of beholding this mediatorial glory of Christ in his kingdom; and this favour our Saviour entreats of his Father for others that shall believe on him, as well as for his apostles.

I might here take occasion to enquire, whether every text, which promises to other christians, as well as to the apostles, a dwelling with Christ in his kingdom, must not have a more special reference to the glory of the separate state, upon this very account, because this kingdom of Christ ceases at the resurrection and judgment; and particularly that text in 2 Pet. i. 11. *So an entrance shall be ministered unto you, abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ:* which is often, in scripture, called everlasting, because it continues to the end of the world: And the abundant entrance into it, very naturally refers to our departure from this life.

4. I cannot find any text of scripture, where this blessing of being present with the Lord, after death, in the separate state, is limited only to the apostles: I read not one word of such a peculiar favour promised them by Christ; and, therefore, according to the current course of several other places of scripture, which have been here produced, I am persuaded it belongs to all true christians, unless the apostle, in some plainer manner, had limited it to himself, and his twelve brethren, and secluded or forbid our hopes of it.

After all, if it be allowed, that the apostles may enjoy the blessedness of a separate

state before the resurrection, then there is such a thing as a separate state of happiness for souls: this precludes, at once, all the arguments against it, that arise from the nature of things, and from any supposed impropriety in such a divine constitution: And since it is granted, that there are millions of angels, and several human spirits, in this unbodied state, enjoying happiness, I see no reason why the rest of the unbodied spirits of saints departed should not be received to their society after death, unless there were some particular scriptures that excluded them from it.

VI. Phil. i. 23, 24. *For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better: Nevertheless, to abide in the flesh, is more needful for you.* When the apostle speaks here of his abiding in the flesh, and his departing from the flesh, he declares the first was more needful for the Philippians, to promote religion in their hearts and lives; but the second would be better for himself, for he should be with Christ, when he was departed from the flesh.

I would only ask any reasonable man to determine, whether, when St. Paul speaks of his being with Christ after his departure from the flesh, he can suppose, that the apostle did not expect to see Christ till the resurrection, which he knew would be a considerable distance of time, though perhaps it has proved many hundred years longer than the apostle himself expected it? No; it is evident, he hoped to be present with the Lord immediately, as soon as he was absent from the body: otherwise, as I have hinted befor , death to him would have been but of little gain, if he must have lain sleeping till the dead shall rise, and have been cut off from his delightful service for Christ in the gospel, and all the blessed communications of his grace. The objection, which may arise here, also, from supposing this to be a peculiar favour granted to the apostles, is answered just before.

VII. Heb. xii. 22—24. *Ye are come—to the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly, and church of the first-born, which are written or registered in heaven, to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant,* that is, the gospel, or the christian state, brings good men into a nearer union and communion with the heavenly world, and the inhabitants thereof, than the jewish state could do: Now the inhabitants of this upper world, this heavenly Jerusalem, are here reckoned up, God, as the prime Lord or head; Jesus the mediator, as the king of his church; the innumerable company of angels, as ministers of his kingdom; the general assembly of God's favourites, or children, who are called the first-born, perhaps, this may refer, in general, to all the saints of all ages past, and to come, whose names are written in the book of life in heaven: and particularly, to the separate spirits of just men, who are departed from this world, and are made perfect in the heavenly state. The criticisms that are used to put other senses upon these words, seem to carry them away so far from their more plain and obvious meaning, that I can hardly think they are the meaning of the apostle; for it would be of very little use for a common christian to read these verses of divine consolation and grace, if he could take no comfort from them till he had learned those critical and distant expositions of such plain language.

It has been, indeed, objected, against the plain sense of this text, that the spirits of the just, or good men, are not yet made perfect in heaven, because the same apostle, Heb. xi. 39, 40. says, *These all,* that is, the saints of the Old Testament, *having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promises, God having provided some better*

thing for us, that they, without us, should not be made perfect. Now these had been dead for many generations, yet they received not the promises, nor were made perfect. Thus saith the objection.

But the plain meaning of this text is, that they lived and died in the faith of many promises, some of which were to be fulfilled after their days here on earth, but were not fulfilled in their life-time: They did not enjoy the privileges and blessings of the gospel of the Messiah, in that perfect manner in which we do, since the Messiah is actually come, and has fulfilled these promises, and by his death, or *offering himself*, as the same apostle expresses it, *for ever perfected them that are sanctified;* Heb. x. 14. But all this does, by no means, preclude their existence and happiness, in a separate state, as spirits made perfect; that is, in a perfect freedom from all sin and sorrow; though it is probable this very state of comparative perfection might have several degrees of joy added to it at the ascension of Christ, and will have many more at the resurrection from the dead.

VIII. 2 Pet. i. 13, 14. *I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance; knowing that, shortly, I must put off this my tabernacle.* Here it is evident, that the person, who thinks it meet to stir up christians to their duty, has a tabernacle belonging to him, and which he must shortly put off. The soul or thinking principle of the apostle Peter, which is here supposed to be himself, is so plainly distinguished from the tabernacle of the body, in which he dwelt for a season, and which he must put off shortly, that it most evidently implies, an existence of this thinking soul very distinct from the body, and which will exist when the body is laid aside. Surely the conscious being, and its tabernacle or dwelling-place, are two very distinct things, and the conscious being exists when he puts off his present dwelling.

After all these arguments from scripture, may I be permitted to mention one, which is derived partly from reason, and partly from the sacred records, which seems to carry some weight with it?

The doctrine of rewards and punishments, in a separate state of souls, hath been one of the very chief principles or motives, whereby virtue and religion have been maintained in this sinful world, throughout all former ages and nations, and under the several dispensations of God among men, till the resurrection of the body was fully revealed: Now it is scarce to be supposed, that such a doctrine, which God, in the course of his providence, hath made use of as a chief principle and motive of religion and virtue through all the world which had any true virtue, and in all ages before christianity, should be a false doctrine. Let us prove the first proposition, by a view of the several ages of mankind and dispensations of religion.

The heathens, who have had nothing else but the light of nature to guide them, could have no notion at all of the resurrection of the body; and, therefore, not only the wisest and best of them, but, perhaps, the bulk of mankind among the gentiles, at least in Europe and Asia, if not in Africa and America also, who have been taught by priests and poets, and the public opinions of their nation, and traditions of their ancestors, have generally supposed such a separate state after this life, wherein their souls should be rewarded or punished, except where the fancy of transmigration prevailed; and even these very transmigrations into other bodies, *viz.* of dogs, or horses, or men, were assigned as speedy rewards or punishments of their behaviour in this life.

Now though this doctrine of immediate recompences could not be proved by them with certainty and clearness, and had many follies mingled with it, yet the probable

expectation of it, so far as it hath obtained among men, hath had a good degree of influence, through the conduct of common providence, to keep the world in some tolerable order, and prevent universal irregularities and excesses of the highest degree; it hath had some force on the conscience to restrain the enormous wickedness of men.

The patriarchs of the first ages, whose history is related in scripture, had no notion of the resurrection of the body expressly revealed to them that we can find; and it must be the hope of such a state of recompence of their souls after death that influenced their practice of piety, if they were not informed that their bodies should rise again.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had no plain and distinct promise of the resurrection of the body; yet it is said, Heb. xi. 13—16. *They received the promises*, that is, of some future happiness, and embraced them, *and confessed they were strangers and pilgrims on earth, whereby they sought some other country*; that is, *a heaveuly, and God hath prepared a city for them.* What city, what heavenly country can this be, which they themselves sought after, but the city or country of separate souls or paradise, where good men are rewarded, and God is their God, if they had no plain promises or views of a resurrection of the body? And indeed they had need of a very plain and express promise of such a resurrection, to encourage their faith and obedience, if they had no notion or belief of a separate state, or a heavenly country, whither their souls should go at their death.

Job seems to have some bright glimpses of a resurrection, in chap. xix. 25—27. but this was far above the level of the dispensation wherein he lived, and a peculiar and distinguishing favour granted to him under his uncommon and peculiar sufferings.

In the institution of the jewish religion by Moses, there is no express mention of a resurrection, and we must suppose their hope of a future state was chiefly such as they could gain from the light of nature, and learn by traditions from their fathers, or from unwritten instructions. For though our Saviour improves the words of God to Moses in the bush, Exod. iii. 6. *I am the God of Abraham*, &c. so far as to prove a resurrection from them, yet we can hardly suppose the Israelites could carry it any farther than merely to the happiness of Abraham's soul, &c. in some separate state; and thence came the notion of departed souls of good men going to the bosom of Abraham.

I grant that David, in his Psalms, Isaiah and Daniel, in their prophecies, have some hints of the resurrection of the body; but this doth not seem to have been the common principle or support of virtue and goodness, or a general article of belief among the Jews in the early ages.

In the days of the later prophets, and after their return from Babylon, I confess the Jews had some notion of a resurrection; but they also retained their opinion of the righteous souls being at rest with God in a separate state before the resurrection. See the book of Wisdom, chapter iii. 1—4. *The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God. And there shall no torment touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die, and their departure is taken for misery, and their going from us to be utter destruction; but they are in peace; for though they be perished in the sight of men, yet is their hope full of immortality*, and iv. 7. *Though the righteous be prevented with death, yet they shall be in rest.*

That this was the most common doctrine of the Jews, except the Sadducees and their followers in our Saviour's time, and that it was the doctrine of the primitive christians also need not be proved here, though they also had the expectation of the resurrection of the body.

Now if this be the chief or only doctrine which men could attain to under the dispensation of natural reason, as the most powerful motive to virtue and piety, if this be the chiefest doctrine of that kind that we know of, which the patriarchs and primitive Jews enjoyed, if this also be a constant doctrine of later Jews, that is, the wisest and best of them, and also of the primitive christians, which had so much influence on the good behaviour of all of them toward God and men, and by which God carried on his work of piety in their hearts and lives, and by which also he impressed the consciences of evil men in some measure, and restrained them from their utmost excesses of vice and wickedness, it is not hard to be supposed, that this doctrine is all mere fancy and delusion, and hath nothing of truth in it? And, indeed, if this doctrine had been taken away, the heathens would be left without any possible true notion of a future state of recompence, and the patriarchs seem to have had no sufficient principle or motive to virtue and piety left them, and the principles and motives of goodness, in the following ages, among Jews and christians, had been greatly diminished and enfeebled.

At the conclusion of this chapter, I cannot help taking notice, though I shall but just mention it, that the multitude of narratives, which we have heard of in all ages, of the apparition of the spirits or ghosts of persons departed from this life, can hardly be all delusion and falsehood. Some of them have been affirmed to appear upon such great and important occasions as may be equal to such an unusual event; and several of these accounts have been attested by such witnesses of wisdom, and prudence, and sagacity, under no distempers of imagination, that they may justly demand a belief; and the effects of these apparitions, in the discovery of murders and things unknown, have been so considerable and useful, that a fair disputant should hardly venture to run directly counter to such a cloud of witnesses, without some good assurance on the contrary side. He must be a shrewd philosopher, indeed, who, upon any other hypothesis, can give a tolerable account of all the narratives in Glanville's "Sadducismus triumphatus," or Baxter's "World of Spirits and Apparitions," &c. Though I will grant some of these stories have but insufficient proof, yet if there be but one real apparition of a departed spirit, then the point is gained that there is a separate state.

And, indeed, the scripture itself seems to mention such sort of ghosts, or appearances of souls departed, *Matt.* xiv. 26. When the disciples saw Jesus walking on the water, they "*thought it had been a spirit.*" And *Luke* xxiv. 37. after his resurrection, they saw him at once appearing in the midst of them, "*and they supposed they had seen a spirit;*" and our Saviour doth not contradict their notion, but argues with them upon the supposition of the truth of it, "*a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me to have.*" And *Acts* xxiii. 8, 9. the word "*spirit*" seems to signify "the apparition of a departed soul," where it is said, "*The Sadducees say, there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit,*" and verse 9. "*If a spirit or an angel hath spoken to this man,*" &c. A spirit here is plainly distinct from an angel, and what can it mean but an apparition of a human soul which has left the body?

SECTION IV.

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

Having pointed out so many springs of argument to support this doctrine from the

word of God, as well as from reason and tradition, I proceed now to answer some particular objections which are raised against it.

Objection I. The scripture is so far from supposing that the soul of man is immortal, or that there is any such thing as the life of the soul continuing after the death of the body, that it often speaks of the death of the soul, if the words were translated exactly according to the original. Numbers xxxi. 19. "*Whosoever hath killed any person*," Hebrew "any soul." 1 Samuel xxii. 22. "*I have occasioned the death of every soul of thy father's house.* Judges xvi. 30. "*And Samson said, let my soul die with the Philistines.*" Ezek. xviii. 20. "*The soul that sinneth, it shall die.*" Psalm lxxxix. 48. "*What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?*" 1 Kings xix. 4. "Elijah *requested for himself that he might die*," Hebrew, "that his soul might die."

Answer. The word "soul" in English, "nephesh" in Hebrew, "psyche" in Greek, and "anima" in Latin, &c. signifies not only the conscious and active principle in man, which thinks and reasons, loves and hates, hopes and fears, and which is the proper agent in virtue and vice, but it is used also to signify the principle of animal life and motion in a living creature. And though these two in themselves are very distinct things, yet upon this account the word soul is attributed to brutes as well as to men; for the Jews as well as some heathens, in their mistaken philosophy, supposed the same soul of man, which gives natural life to the body, to be also that very intellectual principle which thinks and reasons, fears and loves; and upon this account they gave both these principles, how distinct soever in themselves, one common name, and called them the soul.

Now the soul, or the principle of animal life and motion, being the chief or most valuable thing in an animal, it came to pass, that the whole animal was called a soul; therefore, even birds and fishes are called living souls, *Gen.* i. 20. and any animals whatsoever in scripture are called souls, or living souls. And then, for the same reason, that is, because the soul of man is his chief part, the whole person of man is called his soul, Gen. ii. 7. "*Man became a living soul*," that is a living person. So Exod. i. 5. "*All the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls*," that is, all the persons were seventy.

And this is not only the language of the Jews, but even of other nations. In our country we use the word souls to signify persons; so we say a poor soul, when we see a person in misery: We use the word a meagre soul, for a thin man: We say, there were twenty souls lost in the ship, that is, twenty persons, &c.

Now the word soul, among the Jews, being so universally used to signify the person of man, they used the same word to signify the person when he was dead, as well as when he was alive, Numbers vi. 6. "*He shall come at no dead body*," in the Hebrew, "no dead soul," that is, no dead man or woman, or perhaps no dead animal.

Since the word soul is taken so often, and so commonly, to signify the person of a man or woman, no wonder that there is so frequent mention of souls dying in the scripture, when human persons die.

And if the soul signify a man or woman when they are dead, as well as when living, here is a fair account why the scriptures may speak of the souls going down to the grave, or being delivered from the grave, &c. Psalm lxxxix. 48. "*Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?*" This may either denote his principle of animal life, or his person, that is, himself.

Now this account of things is very consistent with the scriptural doctrine of the distinction of the intelligent soul of man from his body, and the intelligent's soul's survival of the body; nor do any of these scriptural expressions concerning the soul forbid this supposition: For though in some places the word soul signifies the person of the man, or his body, or that animal principle which may die, yet in other places it signifies that intelligent or thinking principle which cannot die, as we have before proved, where our Saviour tells us, "*we should not fear them that kill the body, but cannot kill the soul.*" Wheresoever the scripture speaks of a soul's being killed, it only means that the person, who was mortal, is slain; that is, the life of the body is destroyed, and the man, considered as a compound being, made up of soul and body, is in some sense dissolved, when one part of the composition dies. But where the soul signifies the intellectual principle in man, it is never said to die, unless where the word death means a loss of happiness, or living in misery; but this implies natural life still, for this soul cannot naturally be destroyed by any power but that which made it.

If any person object that the apostle in *Acts* ii. 31. says, "The soul of Christ *was not left in hell*, or the grave," for so the word in the Hebrew may signify, *Psalm* xvi. 10. whence this is cited, there is a sufficient answer to be given to this two or three ways. It may be construed, that the principle of the animal life of Christ was not left to continue in death; or that the person of the man Jesus was not left in death or the grave, the soul being sometimes put for the person; or it may be as well construed, that the spirit of Christ, or his intellectual soul, was not left in the state of the dead, or of separation from the body, which the word "sheol" in the Hebrew, and ἅδης in the Greek, signify.

Here it may be observed also, that the words which signify spirit, "ruach, pneuma, spiritus," in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, and other languages, is used sometimes for air or breath, which is supposed to be the principle of life to the animal body; and sometimes it signifies the intellectual soul, the conscious and active principle in man; and therefore whatsoever may be said of the spirit's dying or being lost, is no proof that the conscious principle in man dies, which is a very different thing from breath or air.

Perhaps it will be said here, does not Moses suppose breath to be the soul or spirit in man, when he says, Gen. ii. 7. *God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.*

I answer, it is evident that Moses makes a plain difference between God's formation of man and brutes, for he makes no distinction between their soul and body in their creation; but he distinguishes the soul from the body of man in his creation, speaking according to the common language and philosophy of that age, as though the soul were in the breath: Nor was it proper to speak in strict philosophical language to those ignorant people; nor were the modes of expression in the Bible so peculiarly formed to teach us philosophy as religion.

But of this distinction between the soul of a brute and the soul of a man, there seems to be a plain intimation given by Solomon in the book of Ecclesiastes, chap. iii. verse 21. *Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of a beast that goeth downward to the earth?* That the spirit of man, that is, his conscious and intellectual principle, goeth upward, or survives at the death of the body, but the spirit of the beast, that is, the spring of its animal life, goeth down to the earth, is mingled with the common elements of this material world, and entirely lost.

But the wise man in this place perhaps expresses some of his former atheistical doubts,

saying, who knows whether there is any difference between them? Yet it intimates thus much, that men who pretended to wisdom in that age, supposed such a difference between the spirit of man and the spirit of a brute.

Objection II. is taken from Psalm vi. 5. *In death there is no remembrance of thee; in the grave who shall give thee thanks?* And Psalm cxlvi. 4. *His breath goeth forth; he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.* And Eccles. ix. 5. *The living know that they shall die, but the dead know not any thing.* From all which words, some would infer there is no such thing as a separate state of souls.

Answer. Both David and his son Solomon exclude all such sort of thoughts and actions, both religious and civil, from the state of death, as are practised in this life; all the pursuits of their present purposes, their present way and manner of divine worship, and their management or consciousness of human affairs: But they do not exclude all manner of consciousness, knowledge, thought or action, such as may be suited to the invisible state of spirits. The design of the writers in those places of scripture require no more than this, and therefore the words cannot be construed to any farther sense, or to exclude the conscious and active powers of a separate spirit from their proper exercise in that invisible world, though they have done with all their actions in the present visible state.

Objection III. is taken from John xiv. 3. *If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also;* which seems to determine the point, that the followers of Christ were not to be present with him, till he came again to this world to raise the dead, and to take his disciples to dwell with him.

Answer 1. It hath been already granted by some persons, who doubt of the separate state of all souls, that the apostles had this special favour allowed them, to be received into the presence of Christ when they departed from this body. Now these words were spoken to the apostles, and therefore they cannot preclude this privilege which they expected, *viz.* that when they were *absent from the body, they should be present with the Lord;* 2 Cor. v. 8.

Answer 2. Christ came again to his disciples at his own resurrection from the dead, and taught them the things of the other world, and better prepared them for the happiness of heaven and his own presence. He came again also by the destruction of the jewish state, and called his own people thence beforehand, as an emblem of their salvation when the world should be destroyed. He also came again at their death, when he that hath the keys of death and the invisible world let them out of the prison of the body into the separate state, that they might dwell with him: The coming of Christ has many and various senses in the New Testament, and need not be referred only to his coming at the day of judgment.

Answer 3. But suppose in this place the words of Christ be construed concerning his great and public coming, to raise the dead and judge the world; it is certain that in that day the disciples shall be received to dwell with him in a much more complete and glorious manner, when both soul and body shall be made the inhabitants of heaven: But this does not preclude or forbid that the separate souls of his followers should be favoured with his presence in paradise, before his public coming to judge the world. Though the last and greatest blessing be only mentioned here, it does not exclude the former.

Objection IV. St. Paul, in *Phil.* iii. 10, 11. says, that he desired to *know Christ, and the power of his resurrection,* &c. if by any means he might attain to the resurrection of

the dead: Now what need had the apostle to be so solicitous about the resurrection, if he expected to be with Christ immediately upon his death, since being with Christ is the state of ultimate happiness.

Answer 1. Some learned men suppose that the apostle here presses after some peculiar exaltations of piety in this world, and after an interest in some first resurrection, or resurrection of the martyrs and most eminent saints, which would be long before the general resurrection of all the dead, according to the visions of St. John, *Rev.* xx. 4—7. But as I am not sufficiently acquainted with the sense of that prophecy to determine my opinion on this side, I proceed to other answers?

Answer 2. What if the words of St. Paul in this place to the Philippians should mean no more than this, as verses 13, 14. *I forget the things that are behind*, as though I had gained so little already as not to be worth my notice; *and I reach forth unto those things which are before*, that is, further degrees of holiness to be obtained, *pressing towards the mark* of perfection, *if by any means I might* be made so conformable to *the death of Christ*, as to be entirely dead to sin, *and if by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead;* that is, to such a perfection of holiness as is represented by the resurrection of Christ, *Rom.* vi. 4, 11. or as that in which the *dead saints shall be raised; for I know I have not already attained it, nor am already perfect.*

Answer 3. Suppose the soul of St. Paul to be present with Christ after death in heaven in a separate state, yet this is not the ultimate or highest happiness of the saints, and therefore he aimed at something higher and farther, namely, the more complete happiness which he should enjoy at the resurrection of the dead.

Objection V. is borrowed from several verses of 1 *Cor.* xv. *viz.* 13, 18, 19, 32. where the apostle is imagined to argue thus: *If there be no resurrection of the dead*, verse 13. *Then they which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished*, verse 18. *Then we have hope only in this life, and nothing else to support us*, verse 19. Then *what advantage do I get by all my sufferings for Christ, if the dead rise not?* We were better comply with the appetites of the flesh, and enjoy a merry life here; *Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die;* verse 32. whereby it is evident, that the apostle places the blessed expectation of those that are fallen asleep in Christ, only and entirely upon their being raised from the dead, which he would not have done if there had been such a separate state: He extends our hope in Christ beyond this life, and raises his own expectation of advantage or reward for his sufferings on the account of the gospel, entirely and only upon the resurrection of the dead, having no notion of any happiness in a separate state of souls: For if he had any such opinion or hope, this expectation of the happiness of the soul in a separate state might have been a sufficient proof, that those who died or slept in the faith of Christ are not perished, and he had abundant reward for his sufferings in that world of separate souls, without the resurrection of the body.

Answer 1. It must be granted, that the scripture, in order to support christians under present trials, chiefly refers them to the day of the resurrection and final judgment, as the great and chief season of retribution. The reason of this will appear under my answer to the following objection: Now the apostle may be supposed to argue here only on this foot, neglecting or overlooking the separate state, as though this final retribution at and after the resurrection of the body, were comparatively the whole, because it is far the chief and most considerable part, being much the most sensible and conspicuous, and of the longest duration. The chief part of any thing is often taken for the whole: And if there

were no resurrection of the dead, that is, if there were no state of retribution at all, then the epicurean reasoning would be good, *Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die;* ver. 32.

And to confirm this exposition, we may take notice, that in other places of scripture, where the resurrection of the dead is mentioned, this "anastasis" includes the whole state of existence after death, both the separate and the resurrection-state: This seems to be the sense of it in that famous place, *Luke* xx. 35. where Christ argues with the Sadducees, who denied the separate state, as well as the resurrection of the body: Now, if you take away this "anastasis," this whole state of existence and retribution, then they that suffer for Christ have no advantage or recompence, and the epicurean doctrine is plainly preferable, at least in the common sense and reasoning of men, and in such seasons of trial and persecution.

Nor is it unreasonable to suppose, that there might be some of these principles of sadducism begun to be instilled into some of the Corinthians, *viz.* that there were no rewards and punishments at all in any future state; for he tells them, *verse* 34. that some of them had not the *knowledge of God;* that is, as a righteous rewarder of them that diligently seek him, *I speak this*, says he, *to your shame.* And, verse 58. *he encourages them to be stedfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord;* that is, there is certainly a future state of recompence for piety, and the discovery of it at the resurrection of the dead is the most public and glorious part of it, and therefore he insists upon this alone.

Answer 2. But we may give yet a more particular answer to this objection; for if we take in the whole scheme of the apostle's argument in this chapter, we shall find there is no sufficient ground for this objection against a separate state. He begins, *ver.* 13—23. and argues thus, *If there be no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen*, for he rose as the first fruits, and his followers shall be the harvest, *verse* 23. but if there were no harvest, there were no first fruits: And *if Christ be not risen, then our preaching is vain, and your faith is vain;* verse 14. "Then we are found false witnesses in matters that relate to God, *verse* 15. mere impostors, who preach a wicked falsehood, and lead you to hope for a happiness, which ye shall never obtain: For *if Christ, who died for our sins*, verse 3. *be not raised for our justification*, as in *Rom.* iv. 25. then ye are yet in your sins, ye lie yet under the guilt of sin; and if so, *then also they, which are fallen asleep in Christ*, or have died in the faith of Christ, *are perished;* verse 18. they must either be condemned, or be utterly lost, both soul and body, having no ground for hope of eternal life, or any life or happiness at all hereafter. Then the hope of christians would be in this life only, and we are miserable creatures, who suffer so much for Christ's sake; *verse* 19. It would be better for us, who have senses and appetites as well as other men, to indulge these senses and appetites, and eat and drink, for to-morrow we die, and there is an end of us: There can be no future state of happiness, of any kind, for us to expect, either in soul or body, if we have deceived you in the doctrine of the resurrection of Christ, and all our gospel be false: We are then such sort of impostors and wicked cheats, as can have no belief of a future state of rewards or punishments, and we were better act like ourselves, and, like mere epicureans, give ourselves up to all present pleasures, than expose ourselves to perpetual sufferings for the sake of a man, who, if there be no resurrection, died, and never rose again, and therefore cannot make us any recompence. Now, this sort of arguing does not at all preclude the separate state of happiness, but rather establish it.

I might add here a further answer to this objection, *viz.* the apostle is representing *the sufferings of the body for Christ's sake;* verse 30—32. and therefore he thinks it proper to encourage christians with the recompence of the resurrection of the body, without taking any particular notice of the happiness of the separate state of the soul: And, in this view of things, his argument stands good. If there be no resurrection of the body, there is no recompence for sufferings in the body; let us then give the body its pleasures of sense; let us eat and drink while we live, for there is an utter end of us in death. But, saith he, *verse* 33. such *evil traditions corrupt good manners*, and therefore they are not, they cannot be true: There must be a resurrection of the body, to encourage sufferings in the body, for the sake of virtue and religion.*

Objection VI. Doth not the New Testament constantly refer the rewards and punishments of good and bad men, to the time of the resurrection of the dead, or the second coming of Christ? Is it not with this prospect it terrifies the sinner? Is it not with this it comforts the good man, and supports him under his present sufferings? It would be endless to cite all the particular texts on this occasion. That one text, 1 *Thess.* iv. 14, 17, 18. speaks the sense of many others, and is sufficient to be cited here. The apostle persuades christians not to *mourn for the dead, as those that sorrow without hope*, and gives this reason; for *those who sleep in Jesus, God will bring with him*, when he comes to raise the dead, and then *they shall be for ever with the Lord;* and he bids them *comfort one another with these words:* Whereas their comforts had been much nearer at hand, if he could have told them of the separate state of happiness which the departed souls of their friends at present enjoyed; and if there had been any such state, he had the fairest opportunity here to introduce it.

Answer. This very text I have mentioned before as a proof of the separate state; and it is plain the apostle seems to hint it, though he doth not insist upon it, when he supposes the soul of the deceased to be with Christ already; for he saith, *God will bring them with him;* that is, from heaven, when he comes to raise their bodies. But to give a more general answer to the objection, as drawn from the silence of scripture in many places about this doctrine of the separate state. There are good reasons why the New Testament more sparingly mentions the separate state of souls, and doth most frequently, but not constantly, refer both rewards and punishments to the resurrection.

1. Because the heathens themselves, at least the wisest and the best of them, did believe some sort of future state of happiness or misery, into which the souls of men should be disposed when they departed from these bodies, according to the vices or virtues they had practised in this life; and they derived this doctrine from their reasonings upon the foot of the light of nature. The writings of Plato, and his followers, and the sentiments of Socrates, conveyed to us in Plato's writings, are full of this opinion, *viz.* of the existence of the souls of good men in a happy state, when they depart from

* There are several pages of just and pertinent answer to this objection, by my learned and ingenious friend, Mr. Henry Grove, in his "Thoughts concerning the Proof of a future State from Reason," which confirm the replies I have here made. "Then they," saith he, "*who are fallen asleep in Christ*, by whom the martyrs seem to be more especially intended, *are perished*, for any thing that Christ can do for them, who will never reward them for their sufferings; never restore that life, which they lost for his sake." And particularly his exposition on those words, "we are most miserable of all men," is very agreeable to the place. "The Greek ελεεινότεροι signifies, that we are more to be pitied than any men, as wanting the common understanding of men, to suffer death for Christ's sake, who would never be able to recompense us for it, if he be not risen from the dead." "And it is," saith he, a little afterward, "for want of observing the intermediate links of the apostle's argument, which he there represents, that some have been at a loss for his meaning, while others have quite mistaken it." See page 124, &c.

the body. Cicero sometimes speaks of it as his opinion, his desire, and his hope; nor were other heathen writers ignorant of this doctrine, but the New Testament speaks less of this point, because it is the evident design of Christ and his apostles to lead their disciples to the more peculiar doctrines of revelation, rather than to treat them with sentiments derived from the light of nature: And this doctrine of the resurrection from the dead, and the eternal rewards and eternal punishments that attend it, are more abundantly mentioned in the New Testament, because they stand so much more connected with *the gospel of* Christ, and with his own resurrection from the dead, which is the chief evidence of its divine authority. It is Christ, who rose from the dead, who is appointed to rise and to judge all mankind; and, therefore, it is natural for the apostles, in their writings, who desire to keep the death and resurrection of Christ always in the view of their converts, to point to the awful events of that day, when their Saviour, risen from the dead, shall appear in the execution of his glorious commission, and judge the world. Thus St. Paul preaches to the Athenians; Acts xvii. 30, 31. *God now commands all men every where to repent; because he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world, in righteousness, by that man, whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance to all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.* And, in many other places, he connects our resurrection, and future recompences, with the resurrection of Christ.'

And in this respect, as well as in some others, the doctrine of rewards and punishments after the resurrection, seems to carry such superior force in it, especially upon those who believe the gospel, that it is no wonder the New Testament more frequently refers to this great day of resurrection, and the apostle derives the chief part of his consolations or terrors from it.

2. Then will be the public and universal retributions of vice and virtue, in a more solemn manner, exhibited before all the world; whereas the entrance of mankind into the recompences of the separate state, is more private and personal.

3. Then will be the day of complete rewards and punishments of man, in both parts of his nature, soul and body: All the separate state belongs only to the soul, and even those recompences are but imperfect before, in comparison of what they will be, when body and soul are united.

4. Then will be the most glorious, visible, and sensible distinction made between the good and bad; and since this belongs to the body as well as the soul, it is very properly set before the eyes of men, in the holy writings, as done at the resurrection, because corporeal and sensible things work more powerfully on their imagination, and more sensibly and effectually strike the consciences of men, than the notion of mere spiritual rewards and punishments in the separate state.

5. The state of rewards and punishments, after the resurrection, will be far the longest and most durable recompence of the good and the bad; and therefore it is called eternal so often in scripture; *everlasting life*, and *everlasting fire;* Matt. xxvi. 46. Whereas the retributions of the separate state are, comparatively, but of short duration; and this is another thing, that makes a sensible impression on the hearts of men, *viz.* the eternal continuance of the joys and sorrows that follow the last judgment.

Perhaps it will be replied here, that in the beginning of this Essay I represented the separate state as a more effectual motive to the hopes and fears of men, because the

joys and sorrows of it were so much nearer at hand than those of the resurrection: And why do I now represent the recompences of the resurrection under such characters as are fit to have the strongest influence, and become the most effectual motive?

Answer. It is granted that the recompences, after the resurrection, have several circumstances that carry with them some peculiar and most powerful motives to religion and virtue; but that awful day may still seem to want this one motive, *viz.* the nearness of it, which belongs eminently to the recompences of the separate state. Now, if the scripture does really reveal the doctrine of rewards and punishments of souls immediately after death, and of soul and body together at the resurrection, then all those circumstances of effectual motive to piety are collected in our doctrine, *viz.* the immediate nearness of them in the separate state, and the public appearance, the universality, the completeness, the sensibility, and the duration of them after the great rising day.

I might yet take occasion from this objection, to give a further reason why the apostles more frequently draw their motives of hope and fear from the resurrection, and the great judgment; that is, that even that day of recompence was generally then supposed to be near at hand, and so there was less need to insist upon the joys and sorrows of the separate state.

As the patriarchs and the Jews of old, after the Messiah was promised, were constantly expecting his first coming almost in every generation, till he did appear, and many modes of prophetical expression in scripture, which speak of things long to come, as though they were present, or just at hand, gave them some occasion for this expectation; so the christians of the first age did generally expect the second coming of Christ to judgment, and the resurrection of the dead, in that very age wherein it was foretold. St. Paul gives us a hint of it in 2 *Thess.* ii. 1, 2. They supposed the *day of the Lord* was just appearing. And many expressions of Christ concerning his return, or coming again after his departure, seemed to represent his absence as a thing of no long continuance. It is true, these words of his may partly refer to his coming to destroy Jerusalem; and the coming in of his kingdom among the gentiles, or his coming by his messenger of death, yet they generally, in their supreme and final sense, point to his coming to raise the dead, and judge the world: And from the words of Christ, also, concerning John, chap. xxi. 22. *If I will that he tarry till I come*, it is probable that the apostles themselves at first, as well as other christians, might derive this apprehension of his speedy coming.

It is certain, that when Christ speaks of his coming, in general, and promiscuous, and parabolical terms, whether with regard to the destruction of Jerusalem, or the judgment of the world, he saith, Matt. xxiv. 34. *Verily, I say to you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.* And the apostles frequently told the world, the coming of the Lord was near; Phil. iv. 5. *The Lord is at hand.* Heb. x. 24. *Exhorting one another—so much the more, as you see the day approaching.* And that this is the day of the coming of Christ, *verse* 37. assures us; *For yet a little while, he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.* Rom. xiii. 12. *Now it is high time to awake out of sleep. The night is far spent; the day is at hand.* 1 Pet. iv. 5. *To him who is ready to judge the quick and the dead.* Verse 7. *The end of all things is at hand.* James v. 8, 9. *The coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Behold the judge standeth at the door.* Rev. xxii. 10. *Seal not up the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand.* Verse 12. *And behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man as his work shall be:*

And the sacred volume is closed with this assurance, verse 20. *Surely, I come quickly;* and the echo, and expectation of the apostle, or the church, *Amen, even so come, Lord Jesus.*

It is granted, that in prophetical expressions, such as all these are, some obscurity is allowed: And it may be doubtful, perhaps, whether some of them may refer to Christ's coming, by the destruction of Jerusalem, or his coming to call particular persons away by his messenger of death, or his appearance to the last judgment. It is granted also, it belongs to prophetical language to set things far distant, as it were, before our eyes, and make them seem present, or very near at hand. But still these expressions had plainly such an influence on primitive christians, as that they imagined the day of resurrection and judgment was very near: And since the prophetical words of Christ and his apostles seemed to carry this appearance in them, and to keep the church under some uncertainty, it is no wonder that the apostles chiefly referred the disciples of that age to the day of the resurrection, for comfort under their sufferings and sorrows: And though they never asserted, that Christ would come to raise the dead, and judge the world in that age, yet when they knew themselves that he would not come so soon, they might not think it necessary to give every christian, or every church, an immediate account of the more distant time of this great event, that the uncertainty of it might keep them ever watchful: And even when St. Paul informs the Thessalonians, that *the day of the Lord* was not so very near as they imagined it; 2 *Thess.* ii. 2. yet he does not put it off beyond that century by any express language.

Thus we see there is very good reason, why the New Testament should derive its motives of terror and comfort chiefly from the resurrection, and the day of judgment; though it is not altogether silent of the separate state of souls, and their happiness or misery commencing, in some measure, immediately after death, which has been before proved by many scriptures cited for that purpose.

Here let it be observed, that I am not concerned in that question, whether human souls, separated from their bodies, have any other corporeal vehicle to which they are united, or by which they act, during the intermediate state between death and the resurrection? All that I propose to maintain here is, that that period or interval is not a state of sleep, that is, utter unconsciousness and inactivity: And whether they be united to a vehicle, or no, I call it still the separate state, because it is a sate of the soul's separation from this body, which is united to it in the present life.

SECTION V.

MORE OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

SINCE this book was written, I have met with several other objections against the doctrine here maintained; and as, I think, they may all have a sufficient answer given to them, and the truth be defended against the force of them, I thought it very proper to lead the reader into a plain and easy solution of them.

Objection VII. Is not long life represented often in scripture, and especially in the Old Testament, as a blessing to man? And is not death set before us as a curse, or punishment? But can either of these representations be just or true, if souls exist in a separate

state? Are they not then brought into a state of liberty by death, and freed from all the inconveniences of this flesh and blood? By this means death ceases to be a punishment, and long life to be a blessing.

Answer. It is according as the characters of men are either good or bad, and according as good men know more or less of a separate state of rewards or punishments, so a long life, or early death, are to be esteemed blessings or calamities in a greater or a less degree.

Long life was represented as a blessing to good men, inasmuch as it gave them opportunity to enjoy more of the blessings of this life, and to do more service for God in the world; And especially, since in ancient times there was much darkness upon this doctrine of the future state, and many good men had not so clear a knowledge of it. Long life was also a blessing to wicked men, because it kept them in a state wherein there were some comforts, and withheld them for a season from the punishments of the separate state.

Death was doubtless a punishment and a curse, when it was first brought into human nature by the sin of Adam, as it cut off mankind from the blessings of this life, and plunged him into a dark and unknown state: And if he were a wicked man, it plunged him into certain misery. But since the blessings of the future state of happiness for good men are more clearly revealed, long life is not so very great a blessing, nor death so great a punishment to good men; for death is sanctified by the covenant of grace, to be an introduction of their souls into the separate state of happiness, and the curse is turned, in some respect, into a blessing.

Objection VIII. Was it not supposed to be a great privilege to Enoch and Elijah, when they were translated without dying? But what advantage could it be to either of them to carry a body with them to heaven, if their souls could act without it?

I answer, when Enoch and Elijah carried their bodies to heaven with them, it was certainly a sublime honour, and a peculiar privilege which they enjoyed, to have so early a happiness, both in flesh and spirit, conferred upon them, so many ages before the rest of mankind: For though the soul can act without the body, yet as a body is part of the compounded nature of man, our happiness is not designed to be complete, till the soul and body are united in a state of perfection and glory. And this happiness was conferred early on those two favourites of heaven.

Objection IX. Was it not designed as a favour, when persons were raised from the dead, under the Old Testament or the New, by the prophets, by Christ, and by his apostles? But what benefit could this be to them, if they had consciousness and enjoyment in the other world? Was it not rather an injury, to bring them back from a state of happiness into such a miserable world as this?

Answer 1. Since these souls were designed to be soon restored to their bodies, and the persons were to be raised to a mortal life again in a few days, it is probable they were kept just in the same state of immemorial consciousness, as the soul is in while the body is in the deepest sleep; and so were not immediately sent to heaven or hell, or determined to a state of sensible happiness or misery. Then when the person was raised to life again, there was no remembrance of the intermediate state, but all the consciousness of that day or two vanished, and were forgotten for ever, as it is with us when we sleep soundly without dreaming.

Answer 2. If those who were raised by Christ, or the prophets, or the apostles, were

pious persons, they submitted, by the will of God, to a longer continuance in this world, amidst some difficulties and sorrows, which submission would be abundantly recompensed hereafter. If they were not good persons, their renewed life on earth was a reprieve from punishment. So there was no injury done to any of them. As for those, who were raised at the resurrection of Christ, and were seen by many persons in the holy city, there is no doubt but they were raised to immortality, and ascended to heaven when Christ did, as part of his triumphant attendants, and went to dwell with him in the heavenly state.

Objection X. If the martyrs and confessors were to be partakers of *the first resurrection*, in *Rev.* xx. 4, 5. would not this be a punishment, instead of a blessing, to be called from the immediate presence of God, and Christ, and angels, to be reunited to bodies on earth, and dwell here again with men? Therefore, it seems more probable, that the souls of these holy martyrs had no such separate existence, or enjoyment of happiness.

Answer. Perhaps neither that text, nor any others in the Bible, foretel the resurrection of any number of persons to an animal earthly life again in this world: Perhaps that prophecy means no more, than that the cause of Christ and religion, for which men were martyred and beheaded heretofore, shall rise again in the world, and the professors of it in that day shall be in flourishing circumstances, for a thousand years, or a very long season? So that, in prophetic language, these words do not signify the same individual martyrs or confessors, but their successors in the same faith and practice. Or, if there should be any resurrection of good men to an animal life in this world, foretold by the prophets, and intended by the great and blessed God, I doubt not but they would be here so far separated from the wicked world, where sins and sorrows reign, that it would be a gradual advance of their happiness beyond what they enjoyed before in the separate state.

Objection XI. Though man is often said to be a compound creature of soul and body, yet in scripture he is represented as one being: It is the man that is born, that lives, that dies, that sleeps or wakes, and that rises from the dead. This is evident in many places of scripture, where these things are spoken of; and it seems to be the law of our nature or being, that we should always act and live in such a state, as souls united to bodies, and never in a state of separation.

Answer. Though there are several scriptures, which represent man as one being, *viz.* soul and body united, yet there are many other scriptures, which have been cited in the former parts of this Essay, wherein the souls and the bodies of men are represented as two very distinct things: The one goes to the grave at death, and the other either into Abraham's *bosom*, or to a place of torment; either to dwell with God, to be present with Christ the Lord, and to become one of *the spirits of the just made perfect*, or to go to their own place, as Judas did. Now those texts, where man is represented as one being, may be explained with very great ease, considering man as made up of two distinct substances, *viz.* body and spirit united into one personal agent, as we have shewn before: But the several texts, where the soul and body are so strongly and plainly distinguished, as has been before represented, there is no possible way of representing these scriptures, but by supposing a separate state of existence for souls after the body is dead, which makes it necessary that this exposition should take place.

Objection XII. How comes death to be called so often in scripture a sleep, if the soul wakes all the while?

Answer. Why is the repose of the man every night called sleep, since the soul wakes, as appears by a thousand dreams? But as a sleeping man ceases to act in the businesses or affairs of this world, though the soul be not dead or unthinking, so death is called sleep, because, during that state, men are cut off from the businesses of this world, though the soul may think and act in another.

Objection XIII. The scripture speaks often of the general judgment of mankind at the last great day of the resurrection, but it does not teach us the doctrine of a particular judgment, which the soul is supposed to pass under, when every single man dies; why then should we invent such a supposition, or believe such a doctrine, of a particular judgment in a separate state?

Answer. It is evident in many scriptures, as we have shewn before, that the souls of men, after death, are represented as enjoying pleasure or punishment in the separate state. The soul of Lazarus in heaven, the soul of Dives in hell, the soul of Paul, as being *present with the Lord, which is far better*, than dwelling in this flesh, or being present with this body, &c. Therefore there must be a sort of judgment, or sentence of determination, passed upon every such soul by the great God, whether it shall be happy or miserable: For it can better be supposed, that happiness or misery should be given to such souls, without the determination of God, the judge of all: And perhaps that text, *Heb.* ix. 27. refers to it: *It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment*; that is, immediately after it.

Or suppose that, in the separate state, the pleasures or sorrows which attend souls departing from the body, should be only such as are the necessary consequents of a life spent in the practice of vice or virtue, of religion or ungodliness, without any formalities of standing before a judgment-seat, or a solemn sentence of absolution or condemnation; yet the very entrance upon this state, whether it be of peace or of torment, must be supposed to signify, that the state of that soul is adjudged or determined by the great Governor of the world: And this is all that is necessarily meant by a particular judgment of each soul at death, whether it pass under the solemn formalities of a judgment and a tribunal, or no.

Objection XIV. If the saints can be happy without a body, what need of a resurrection? Let the body be as refined, as active, as powerful and glorious as it can be, still it must certainly be a clog to the soul: And this was the objection that the heathen philosophers made to the doctrine of the resurrection, which the christians profess; for the philosophers told them, this resurrection, which they called their highest reward, was really a punishment.

Answer. The force of this objection has been quite taken away before, when it has been shewn that man, being a creature compounded of body and spirit, was designed for its highest happiness, and the perfection of its nature, in this state of union, and not in a state of separation. And let it be observed, that when the body shall be raised from the grave, it shall not be such flesh and blood as we now wear, nor made of such materials as shall clog or obstruct the soul in any of its most vigorous and divine exercises: but it shall be a *spiritual body*: 1 Cor. xv. 44. a body fitted to serve a holy and a glorified spirit in its actions and its enjoyments, and to render the spirit capable of some further excellencies, both of action and enjoyment, than it is naturally capable of without

a body. What sort of qualities this new-raised body shall be endued with, in order to increase the excellency or the happiness of pious souls, will be, in a great measure, a mystery or a secret, till that blessed morning appears.

Objection XV. Is not our immortality, in scripture, described as built upon the incorruptible state of our new-raised bodies? 1 Cor. xv. 53. *This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.* But the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is not particularly found or taught in scripture.

Answer. It is granted, that the immortality of the new-raised body is built on that incorruptible sort of materials, of which it is to be formed, or which shall be mingled with it, or the incorruptible qualities which shall be given to it by God himself: But the soul is immortal in itself, whether with or without a body: And he that can read all those texts of scripture, which have been before made use of in this Essay, wherein the existence of the spirit, after the death of the body, is so plainly expressed, and cannot find the "immortality of the soul" in them, or the "spirit's capacity of existence in a separate state from the body," must be left to his own sentiments to explain, and verify the expressions of Christ and his apostles some other way: Or he must acknowledge, that their expressions are somewhat incautious and dangerous, since it is evident they lead thousands and ten thousands of wise and sober readers into this sentiment of the soul's immortality.

Whether the soul, in its own nature, be necessarily immortal, is a point of philosophy, and not to be sought for directly in scripture: But whether the great God, the governor of the world, has not appointed souls to exist in a separate state of happiness or misery, after the bodies are dead, seems to me to be so plainly determined in many of the scriptures which have been cited, as leaves no sufficient reason to doubt of the truth of it.

To conclude, though I think the doctrine of the separate state of souls to be of much importance in christianity, and that the denial of it carries great inconveniences, and weakens the motives to virtue and piety, by putting off all manner of rewards and punishments at such a distance as the general resurrection, yet I dare not contend for it as a matter of such absolute necessity, that a man cannot be a christian without it. But this must be confessed, that they who deny this doctrine, seem to have need of stronger inward zeal to guard them against temptation, and to keep their hearts always alive and watchful to God and religion, since their motives to strict piety and virtue are sensibly weakened, by renouncing all belief of this nearer and more immediate commencement of heaven and hell.

DISCOURSE I.

THE END OF TIME.

REV. X. 5, 6.

AND THE ANGEL, WHICH I SAW STAND UPON THE SEA, AND UPON THE EARTH, LIFTED UP HIS HAND TO HEAVEN, AND SWARE BY HIM THAT LIVETH FOR EVER AND EVER,—THAT THERE SHOULD BE TIME NO LONGER.

THIS is the oath, and the solemn sentence of a mighty angel, who came down from heaven, and, by the description of him in the first verse, he seems to be the *angel of God's presence, in whom is the name of God*, even our Lord Jesus Christ himself, who pronounced, and sware, that *time should be no longer;* for all seasons and times are now put into his hand, together with the book of his Father's decrees; *Rev.* v. 7, 9. What special age or period of time, in this world, the prophecy refers to, may not be so easy to determine; but this is certain, that it may be happily applied to the period of every man's life; for whensoever the term of our continuance in this world is finished, our time, in the present circumstances and scenes that attend it, shall be no more. We shall be swept off the stage of this visible state into an unseen and eternal world: Eternity comes upon us at once, and all that we enjoy, all that we do, and all that we suffer in *time, shall be no longer.*

Let us stand still here, and consider, in the first place, what awful and important thoughts are contained in this sentence, what solemn ideas should arise to the view of mortal creatures, when it shall be pronounced concerning each of them, that time shall be no more.

I. "The time of the recovery of our nature from its sinful and wretched state shall be no longer." We come into this world fallen creatures, children of iniquity, and heirs of death; we have lost the image of God, who made us, and which our nature enjoyed in our first parents; and, instead of it, we are changed into the image of the devil, in the lusts of the mind, in pride and malice, in self-sufficiency and enmity to God; and we have put on also the image of the brute, in sinful appetites and sensualities, and in the lusts of the flesh; nor can we ever be made truly happy, till the image of the blessed God be restored upon us; till we are made holy, as he is holy; till we have a divine change passed upon us, whereby we are created anew, and reformed in heart and practice. And this life is the only time given us for this important change. If this life be finished before the image of God be restored to us, this image will never be restored; but we shall bear the likeness of devils for ever; and perhaps the image of the brute too, at the resurrection of the body, and be farther off from God, and all that is holy, than ever we were here upon earth.

Of what infinite importance is it then, to be frequently awakening ourselves, at special seasons and periods of life, to enquire, whether this image of God is begun to be re-

newed, whether we have this glorious change wrought in us, whether our desires and delights are fixed upon holy and heavenly things, instead of those sensual and earthly objects, which draw away all our souls from God and heaven. Let it appear to us as a matter of utmost moment to seek after this change; let us pursue it with unwearied labours, and strivings with our own hearts, and perpetual importunities at the throne of grace, lest the voice of him who swears that *there shall be time no longer*, should seize us in some unexpected moment, and lest he swear in his wrath concerning us, *Let him that is unholy be unholy still, and let him that is filthy be filthy still;* Rev. xxii. 11.

II. When this sentence is pronounced concerning us, " the season and the means of restoring us to the favour and love of God shall be no longer." We are born children of wrath, as well as the sons and daughters of iniquity; *Eph.* ii. 3. We have lost the original favour of our Maker and are banished from his love, and the superior blessings of his goodness; and yet, blessed be the Lord, that we are not at present for ever banished beyond all hope: This time of life is given us to seek the recovery of the love of God, by returning to him according to the gospel of his Son: Now is pardon and peace, now is grace and salvation preached unto men, to sinful wretched men, who are at enmity with God, and the objects of his high displeasure; now the voice of mercy calls to us, *This is the accepted time, this is the day of salvation;* 2 Cor. vi. 2. *To-day if ye will hear his voice, let not your hearts be hardened to refuse it;* Heb. iii. 15. Now the fountain of the blood of Christ is set open to wash our souls from the guilt of sin; now all the springs of his mercy are broken up in the ministrations of the gospel; now *God is in Christ, reconciling sinners to himself;* 2 Cor. v. 19. and *he has sent us his ministers to intreat you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God; and we beseech you in his name, continue not one day or one hour longer in your enmity and rebellion, but be ye reconciled to God your Creator, and accept of his offered forgiveness and grace,* verse 20.

The moment is hastening upon us, when this mighty angel, who manages the affairs of the kingdom of providence, shall swear concerning every unbelieving and impenitent sinner, that the " time of offered mercy shall be no longer, the time of pardon and grace and reconciliation shall be no more:" The sound of this mercy reaches not to the regions of the dead; those who die before they are reconciled, they die under the load of all their sins and must perish for ever, without the least hope or glimpse of reconciling or forgiving grace.

III. At the term of this mortal life, " the time of prayer and repentance and service for God or man in this world shall be no longer." Eccles. ix. 10. *There is no work nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest, whither we are all hastening.* Let every sinful creature therefore ask himself, " Have I never yet begun to pray? Never begun to call upon the mercy of the God that made me? Never begun to repent of all my crimes and follies? Nor begun in good earnest to do service for God, or to honour him amongst men?" Dreadful thought indeed! When, it may be, the next hour we may be put out of all capacity and opportunity to do it for ever! As soon as ever an impenitent sinner has the veil of death drawn over him, all his opportunities of this kind are for ever cut off: He that has never repented, never prayed, never honoured his God, shall never be able to pray or repent, or do any thing for God or his honour through all the ages of his future immortality: Nor is there any promise made to repenting or returning sinners in the other world, whither we are hastening. *As the tree falls, when*

it is cut down, so it lies, and it must for ever lie; pointing to the north or the south, to hell or heaven? *Eccles.* xi. 3.

And, indeed, there is no true prayer, no sincere repentance can be exercised after this life; for the soul that has wasted away all its time given for repentance and prayer, is at the moment of death left under everlasting hardness of heart; and whatsoever enmity against God and godliness, was found in the heart in this world, is increased in the world to come, when all manner of softening means and mercies are ever at an end. This leads me to the next thought.

IV. " How wretched soever our state is at death, the day of hope is ended, and it returns no more." Be our circumstances never so bad, yet we are not completely wretched while the time of hope remains. We are all by nature miserable by reason of sin, but it is only despair can perfect our misery. Therefore fallen angels are sealed up under misery, because there is no door of hope opened for them. But in this life there is hope for the worst of sinful men: There is the word of grace and hope calling them in the gospel; there is the voice of divine mercy sounding in the sanctuary, and *blessed are they that hear the joyful sound;* Psalm lxxxix. 15. But if we turn the deaf ear to the voice of God and his Son, and to all the tender and compassionate entreaties of a dying Saviour, hope is hastening to its period; for this very angel will shortly swear, that this joyful sound shall be heard no longer.

He comes now to the door of our hearts, he sues there for admittance, " open unto me and receive me as your Saviour and your Lord, give me and my gospel free admission, and I will come in and bestow upon you the riches of my grace and all my salvation: Open your hearts to me with the holy desires and humble submission of penitence, and receive the blessings of righteousness and pardon and eternal life." He now invites you to return to God, with an acknowledgment and renunciation of every sin, and he offers to take you by the hand, and introduce you into his Father's presence with comfort: This is a day of hope for the vilest and most hateful criminals; but if you continue to refuse, he will shortly swear in his wrath, you shall never enter into his kingdom, you shall never taste of the provisions of his grace, you shall never be partakers of the blessings purchased with his blood. *Heb.* iii. 11, 18. *I sware in my wrath,* saith the Lord, *they shall not enter into my rest.*

Oh the dreadful state of sinful creatures, who continue in such obstinacy, who waste away the means of grace and the seasons of hope, week after week and month after month, till the day of grace and hope is for ever at an end with them? Hopeless creatures! Under the power and the plague of sin, under the wrath and curse of a God, under the eternal displeasure of Jesus, who was once the minister of his Father's love, and they must abide under all this wretchedness through a long eternity, and in the land of everlasting despair. But I forbear that theme at present, and proceed.

V. At the moment of our death, " the time of our preparation for the hour of judgment, and for the insurance of heaven and happiness, shall be no longer." Miserable creatures that are summoned to die thus unprepared! This life is the only time to prepare for dying, to get ready to stand before the Judge of the whole earth, and to secure our title to the heavenly blessedness. Let my heart enquire, " Have I ever seriously begun to prepare for a dying hour, and to appear before the Judge of all? Have I ever concerned myself in good earnest, to secure an interest in the heavenly inheritance,

when this earthly tabernacle shall be dissolved? Have I ever made interest for the favour of God, and a share of the inheritance of the saints by Jesus the great Mediator, while he afforded life and time?"

Death is daily and hourly hastening upon us: Death is the king of terrors, and will fulfil all his name to every soul that is unprepared. It is a piece of wisdom then for every one of us, since we must die, to search and feel whether death has lost its sting or no: Whether it be taken away by the blood of Christ? Is this blood sprinkled on my conscience, by the humble exercise of faith on a dying Saviour? Are the terrors of death removed, and am I prepared to meet it by the sanctifying influences of the blessed Spirit? Have I such an interest in the covenant of grace as takes away the sting of death, as turns the curse into a blessing, and changes the dark scenes of death into the commencement of a new and everlasting life? This is that preparation for dying for which our time of life was given us, and happy are those who are taught of God to make this use of it.

Judgment is making haste towards us: months and days of divine patience are flying swift away, and the last great day is just at hand: Then *we must give an account of all that has been done in the body, whether it has been good or evil;* 2 Cor. v. 10. And what a dismal and distressing surprise will it be, to have the Judge come upon us in a blaze of glory and terror, while we have no good account to give at his demand? And yet this is the very end and design of all our time, which is lengthened out to us on this side the grave, and of all the advantages that we have enjoyed in this life, that we may be ready to render up our account with joy to the Judge of all the earth.

Heaven is not ours by birth and inheritance, as lands and houses on earth descend to us from our earthly parents. We, as well as they, are by nature unfit for heaven and children of wrath; but we may be born again, we may be born of God, and become heirs of the heavenly inheritance through Jesus Christ: We may be renewed into the temper and spirit of heaven; and this life is the only season that is given us for this important change: Shall we let our days and years pass away, one after another in long succession, and continue the children of wrath still? Are we contented to go on this year as the last, without a title to heaven, without a divine temper, and without any preparation for the business, or the blessedness of that happy world?

VI. When this life comes to an end, "the time of all our earthly comforts and amusements shall be no more." We shall have none of these sensible things around us to employ or entertain our eyes or our ears, to gratify our appetites, to sooth our passions, or to support our spirits in distress. All the infinite variety of cares, labours and joys, which surround us here, shall be no more; life with all the busy scenes, and the pleasing satisfactions of it dissolve and perish together: Have a care then that you do not make any of them your chief hope, for they are but the things of time, they are all short and dying enjoyments.

Under the various calamities of this life we find a variety of sensible reliefs, and our thoughts and souls are called away from their sorrows, by present business, or diverted by present pleasure; but all these avocations and amusements will forsake us at once, when we drop this mortal tabernacle, we must enter alone into the world of spirits, and live without them there.

Whatsoever agonies or terrors, or huge distresses we may meet with in that unknown region, we shall have none of these sensible enjoyments to soften and allay them, no

drop of sweetness to mix with that bitter cup, no scenes of gaiety and merriment to relieve the gloom of that utter darkness, or to sooth the anguish of that eternal heart-ach. O take heed, my friends, that your souls do not live too much on any of the satisfactions of this life, that your affections be not set upon them in too high a degree, that you make them not your idols and your chief good, lest you be left helpless and miserable under everlasting disappointment, for they cannot follow you into the world of souls; they are the things of time, and they have no place in eternity. Read what caution the apostle Paul gives us, in our converse with the dearest comforts of life; 1 *Cor.* vii. 29. *The time is short; and let those who have the largest affluence of temporal blessings, who have the nearest and kindest relatives, and the most endeared friendships, be mortified to them, and be in some sense, as though they had them not, for ye cannot possess them long.* St. Peter joins in the same sort of advice; 1 *Peter* iv. 7. *The end of all things is at hand, therefore be ye sober,* be ye moderate in every enjoyment on earth, and prepare to part with them all, when the angel pronounces, that *time shall be no longer:* His sentence puts an effectual period to every joy in this life, and to every hope that is not eternal.

Thus we have taken a brief survey, what are the solemn and awful thoughts, relating to such mortal creatures in general, which are contained in this voice or sentence of the angel, that time shall be no longer. In the

Second place, let us proceed further and enquire a little, "what are those terrors which will attend sinners, impenitent sinners, at the end of time."

I. "A dreadful account must be given of all this lost and wasted time. When the Judge shall ascend his throne in the air, and all the sons and daughters of Adam are brought before him, the grand enquiry will be, what have you done with all the time of life in yonder world? "You spent thirty or forty years there, or perhaps seventy or eighty, and I gave you this time with a thousand opportunities and means of grace and salvation; what have you done with them all? How many sabbaths did I afford you? How many sermons have ye heard? How many seasons did I give you for prayer and retirement, and converse with God and your own souls? Did you improve time well? Did you pray? Did you converse with your souls and with God? Or did you suffer time to slide away in a thousand impertinences, and neglect the one thing necessary?"

II. "A fruitless and bitter mourning for the waste and abuse of time," will be another consequence of your folly. Whatsoever satisfaction you may take now, in passing time away merrily and without thinking, it must not pass away so for ever. If the approaches of death do not awaken you, yet judgment will do it. Your consciences will be worried with terrible reflections on your foolish conduct.

Oh! could we but hear the complaints of the souls in hell, what multitudes of them would be found groaning out this dismal note, "how hath my time been lost in vanity, and my soul is now lost for ever in distress:" How might I have shone among the saints in heaven, had I wisely improved the time which was given me on earth, given me on purpose to prepare for death and heaven? Then they will for ever curse themselves, and call themselves eternal fools, for hearkening to the temptations of flesh and sense, which wasted their time and deprived them of eternal treasures.

III. Another of the terrors, which will seize upon impenitent sinners at the end of time, will be endless despair of the recovery of lost time, and of those blessings, whose hope is for ever lost with it. There are blessings offered to sinful, miserable men in time, which will never be offered in eternity, nor put within their reach for ever. The

gospel hath no calls, no invitations, no encouragements, no promises for the dead, who have lost and wasted their time, and are perished without hope. The region of sorrow, whither the Judge shall drive impenitent sinners, is a dark and desolate place, where light and hope can never come; but fruitless repentance, with horrors and agonies of soul, and doleful despair reign through that world, without one gleam of light or hope, or one moment of intermission. Then will despairing sinners gnaw their tongues, for anguish of heart, and curse themselves with long execrations, and curse their fellow-sinners, who assisted them to waste their time, and to ruin their souls.

IV. The last terror I shall mention, which will attend sinners at the end of time, is, "an eternal suffering of all the painful and dismal consequences of lost and wasted time." Not one smile from the face of God for ever, not one glimpse of love or mercy in his countenance, not one word of grace from Jesus Christ, who was once the chief messenger of the grace of God, not one favourable regard from all the holy saints and angels; but the fire and brimstone burn without end, *and the smoke of this their torment will ascend for ever and ever, before the throne of God, and the Lamb;* Rev. xiv. 11.

Who knows how keen and bitter will be the agonies of an awakened conscience, and the vengeance of a provoked God, in that world of misery? How will you cry out, "Oh! what a wretch have I been, to renounce all the advices of a compassionate Father, when he would have persuaded me to improve the time of youth and health! Alas, I turned a deaf ear to his advice, and now time is lost, and my hopes of mercy for ever perished. How have I treated with ridicule, among my vain companions, the compassionate and pious councils of my aged parents, who laboured for my salvation? How have I scorned the tender admonitions of a mother, and wasted that time in sinning and sensuality, which should have been spent in prayer and devotion? And God turns a deaf ear to my cries now, and is regardless of all my groanings." This sort of anguish of spirit, with loud and cutting complaints, would destroy life itself, and these inward terrors would sting their souls to death, if there could be any such thing as dying there. Such sighs, and sobs, and bitter agonies would break their hearts, and dissolve their being, if the heart could break, or the being could be dissolved: But immortality is their dreadful portion: immortality of sorrows, to punish their wicked and wilful abuse of time, and that waste of the means of grace they were guilty of in their mortal state.

Here this discourse may be divided.

I proceed in the last place, to consider what reflections may be made on this discourse, or what are some of the profitable lessons to be learned from it.

Reflection I. We may learn, with great evidence, the inestimable worth and value of time, and particularly to those who are not prepared for eternity. Every hour you live is an hour longer given you to prepare for dying, and to save a soul. If you were but apprized of the worth of your own souls, you would better know the worth of days and hours, and of every passing moment, for they are given to secure your immortal interest, and save a soul from everlasting misery. And you would be zealous and importunate in the prayer of Moses, the man of God, upon a meditation of the shortness of life; *Psalm* xc. 12. *So teach us to number our days, as to apply our hearts to wisdom;* that is, so teach us to consider, how few and uncertain our days are, that we may be truly wise in preparing for the end of them.

It is a matter of vast importance, to be ever ready for the end of time, ready to hear

this awful sentence, confirmed with the oath of the glorious angel, that *time shall be no longer*. The terrors, or the comforts of a dying bed depend upon it: The solemn and decisive voice of judgment depends upon it: The joys and the sorrows of a long eternity depend upon it: Go now, careless sinner, and, in the view of such things as these, go and trifle away time, as you have done before; time, that invaluable treasure! Go, and venture the loss of your souls, and the hopes of heaven, and your eternal happiness, in wasting away the remnant hours or moments of life; But remember the awful voice of the angel is hastening towards you, and the sound is just breaking in upon you, that *time shall be no longer*.

Reflection II. "A due sense of time, hastening to its period, will furnish us with perpetual new occasions of holy meditation."

Do I observe the declining day, and the setting sun, sinking into darkness? So declines the day of life, the hours of labour, and the season of grace: O may I finish my appointed work with honour ere the light is fled! May I improve the shining hours of grace ere the shadows of the evening overtake me, and my time of working is no more!

Do I see the moon gliding along through midnight, and fulfilling her stages in the dusky sky? This planet also is measuring out my life, and bringing the number of my months to their end. May I be prepared to take leave of the sun and moon, and bid adieu to these visible heavens, and all the twinkling glories of them! These are all but the measures of my time, and hasten me on towards eternity.

Am I walking in a garden, and stand still to observe the slow motion of the shadow upon a dial there? It passes over the hour lines with an imperceptible progress, yet it will touch the last line of day-light shortly: So my hours and my moments move onward with a silent pace; but they will arrive with certainty at the last limit, how heedless soever I am of their motion, and how thoughtless soever I may be of the improvement of time, or of the end of it.

Does a new year commence, and the first morning of it dawn upon me? Let me remember, that the last year was finished, and gone over my head, in order to make way for the entrance of the present: I have one year the less to travel through this world, and to fulfil the various services of a travelling state: May my diligence in duty be doubled, since the number of my appointed years is diminished!

Do I find a new birth-day, in my survey of the calendar, the day wherein I entered upon the stage of mortality, and was born into this world of sins, frailties, and sorrows, in order to my probation for a better state? Blessed Lord, how much have I spent already of this mortal life, this season of my probation, and how little am I prepared for that happier world? How unready for my dying moment? I am hastening hourly to the end of the life of man, which began at my nativity: Am I yet born of God? Have I begun the life of a saint? Am I prepared for that awful day, which shall determine the number of my months on earth? Am I fit to be born into the world of spirits through the straight gate of death? Am I renewed in all the powers of my nature, and made meet to enter into that unseen world, where there shall be no more of these revolutions of days and years, but one eternal day fills up all the space with divine pleasure, or one eternal night with long and deplorable distress and darkness?

When I see a friend expiring, or the corps of my neighbour conveyed to the grave: Alas! their months and minutes are all determined, and the seasons of their trial are finished for ever; they are gone to their eternal home, and the estate of their souls is

fixed unchangeably: The angel that has sworn, their "*time shall be no longer*," has concluded their hopes, or has finished their fears, and, according to the rules of righteous judgment, has decided their misery or happiness for a long immortality. Take this warning, O my soul, and think of thy own removal!

Are we standing in the church-yard, paying the last honours to the relics of our friends? What a number of hillocks of death appear all around us! What are the tombstones but memorials of the inhabitants of that town, to inform us of the period of all their lives, and to point out the day, when it was said to each of them, your "*time shall be no longer*." O may I readily learn this important lesson, that my turn is hastening too! Such a little hillock shall shortly arise for me, on some unknown spot of ground, it shall cover this flesh and these bones of mine in darkness, and shall hide them from the light of the sun, and from the sight of man, till the heavens be no more.

Perhaps some kind surviving friend may engrave my name, with the number of my days, upon a plain funeral stone, without ornament, and below envy: There shall my tomb stand, among the rest, as a fresh monument of the frailty of nature, and the end of time. It is possible some friendly foot may, now and then, visit the place of my repose, and some tender eye may bedew the cold memorial with a tear: One or another of my old acquaintance may, possibly, attend there, to learn the silent lecture of mortality from my grave-stone, which my lips are now preaching aloud to the world: And if love and sorrow should reach so far, perhaps, while his soul is melting in his eye-lids, and his voice scarce finds an utterance, he will point with his finger, and shew his companion the month, and the day of my decease. Oh that solemn, that awful day, which shall finish my appointed time on earth, and put a full period to all the designs of my heart, and all the labours of my tongue and pen!

Think, O my soul! that while friends or strangers are engaged on that spot, and reading the date of thy departure hence, thou wilt be fixed under a decisive and unchangeable sentence, rejoicing in the rewards of time well improved, or suffering the long sorrows, which shall attend the abuse of it, in an unknown world of happiness or misery.

Reflection III. We may learn, from this discourse, "the stupid folly and madness of those who are terribly afraid of the end of time, whensoever they think of it, and yet they know not what to do with their time, as it runs off daily and hourly." They find their souls unready for death, and yet they live from year to year, without any further preparation for dying: They waste away their hours of leisure in mere trifling, they lose their seasons of grace, their means and opportunities of salvation in a thoughtless and shameful manner, as though they had no business to employ them in; they live as though they had nothing to do with all their time but to eat and drink, and be easy and merry. From the rising to the setting sun, you find them still in pursuit of impertinences; they waste God's sacred time, as well as their own, either in a lazy, indolent, and careless humour, or in following after vanity, sin, and madness, while the end of time is hastening upon them.

What multitudes are there of the race of Adam, both in higher and in lower ranks, who are ever complaining they want leisure; and when they have a release from business, for one day or one hour, they hardly know what to do with that idle day, nor how to lay out one of the hours of it for any valuable purpose! Those in higher station, and richer circumstances, have most of their time at their own command and disposal; but, by their actual disposal of it, you plainly see they know not what it is good for, nor what

use to make of it; they are quite at a loss how to get rid of this tedious thing called time, which lies daily as a burden on their hands. Indeed, if their head ache, or their face grow pale, and a physician feel their pulse, or look wishfully on their countenance, and especially if he should shake his head, or tell them his fears, that they will not hold out long, what surprise of soul, what agonies and terrors seize them on a sudden, for fear of the end of time! For they are conscious how unfit they are for eternity: Yet when the pain vanishes, and they feel health again, they are as much at a loss as ever what to do with the remnant of life.

O the painful and unhappy ignorance of the sons and daughters of men, that are sent hither on a trial for eternity, and yet know not how to pass away time! They know not how to wear out life, and get soon enough to the end of the day: They doze their hours away, or saunter from place to place without any design or meaning: They enquire of every one they meet what they shall do to kill time, as the French phrase is, because they cannot spend it fast enough: They are perpetually calling in the assistance of others, to laugh, or sport, or trifle with them, and to help them off with this dead weight of time, while, at the same moment, if you do but mention the end of time, they are dreadfully afraid of coming near it. What folly and distraction is this? What sottish inconsistency is found in the heart and practice of sinful men; Eccles. ix. 3. "*The heart of the sons of men is full of evil; madness is in their heart while they live, and after that, they go down to the dead.*"

Oh that these loiterers would once consider that time loiters not! days and hours, months and years loiter not; each of them flies away with swiftest wing, as fast as succession admits of, and bears them onward to the goal of eternity. If they delay and linger, among toys and shadows, time knows no delay; and they will, one day, learn by bitter experience, what substantial, important, and eternal blessings they have lost by their criminal and shameful waste of time. The apostle Peter assures them, 2 *Peter* ii. 3. though they slumber and sleep in a lethargy of sin, so that you cannot awaken them, yet "*their judgment lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.*" The awful moment is hastening upon them, which shall teach them terribly the true value of time. Then they would give all the golden pleasures, and the riches, and the grandeur of this world, to purchase one short day more, or one hour of time, wherein they might repent and return to God, and get within the reach of hope and salvation: But time, and salvation, and hope are all vanished, and fled, and gone out of their reach for ever.

Reflection IV. Learn, from such meditations as these, "the rich mercy of God, and *the grace of our Lord* Jesus Christ in giving us so long a warning, before *he swears that time shall be no more.*" Every stroke of sickness is a warning-piece, that life is coming to its period: Every death amongst our friends and acquaintance is another tender and painful admonition, that our death also is at hand: The end of every week and every dawning sabbath is another warning; every sermon we hear of the shortness of time and the uncertainty of life is a fresh intimation, that the great angel will shortly pronounce a period upon all our time. How inexcusable shall we be, if we turn the deaf ear to all these warnings? St. Peter advises us to "*count the long-suffering of the Lord for salvation,*" 2 Peter iii. 15. and to secure our eternal safety, and our escape from hell during the season of his lengthened grace.

Alas! How long has Jesus and his mercy, and his gospel waited on you, before you began to think of the things of your everlasting peace? And if you are now solemnly

awakened, yet how long has he waited on you with fresh admonitions and with special providences, with mercies and judgments, with promises and invitations of grace, with threatenings and words of terror, and with the whispers and advices of his own Spirit, since you began to see your danger? And, after all, have you yet sincerely repented of sin? Have you yet received the offered grace? Have you given up yourselves to the Lord, and laid hold of his salvation? *This is the accepted time, this is the day of salvation;* 2 Cor. vi. 2. *To-day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts;* Heb. iii. 7—11. It is never said, through all the Bible, that to-morrow is the day of grace, or to-morrow is the time of acceptance. It is the present hour only that is offered. Every day and every hour is a mercy of unknown importance to sinful men: It is a mercy, O sinners, that you awaked not this morning in hell, and that you were not fixed without remedy beyond the reach of hope and mercy.

Reflection V. Learn from this discourse what " a very useful practice it would be, to set ourselves often beforehand as at the end of time;" to imagine ourselves just under the sound of the voice of this mighty angel, or at the tribunal of Christ, and to call our souls to a solemn account in what manner we have passed away all our leisure time hitherto; I mean, all that time which hath not been laid out in the necessities of the natural life, for its support and its needful refreshment, or in the due and proper employments of the civil life; both these are allowed and required by the God of nature, and the God of providence, who governs the world; but what hast thou done, O man! O woman! what hast thou done with all the hours of leisure which might have been laid out on far better employments, and to far nobler purposes? Give me leave to enter into particulars a little, for generals do but seldom convince the mind, or awaken the conscience, or affect the heart.

1. Have you not slumbered or squandered away too much time without any useful purpose or design at all? How many are there that when they have morning hours on their hands, can pass them off on their beds, and lose and forget time in a little more sleep and a little more slumber; a few impertinences, with breakfast and dressing, wear out the morning without God. And how many afternoon and evening hours are worn away in such sauntering idleness as I have described, that when the night comes, they cannot review one half hour's useful work, from the dawn of the morning to the hour of rest. Time is gone and vanished, and as they knew not what to do with it while it was present, so now it is past they know not what they have done with it: They keep no account of it, and are never prepared to come to a reckoning: But will the great Judge of all take this for an answer to such a solemn enquiry?

2. Have you never laid out much more time than was needful in recreations and pleasures of sense? Recreations are not unlawful, so far as they are necessary, and proper to relieve the fatigue of the spirits, when they are tired with business or labour, and to prepare for new labours and new businesses: But have we not followed sports without measure, and without due limitation? Hath not some of that very time been spent in them which should have been laid out in preparing for death and eternity, and in seeking things of far higher importance?

3. Have you not wasted too much time in your frequent clubs, and what you call good company, and in places of public resort? Hath not the tavern, or the coffee-house, or the ale-house seen and known you from hour to hour for a whole evening, and that some-

times before the trade or labours of the day should have been ended? And when your Bible, and your closet, or the devotion of your family, have sometimes called upon your conscience, have you not turned a deaf ear to them all?

4. Have not useless and impertinent visits been made to no good purpose, or been prolonged beyond all necessity or improvement? When your conversation runs low, even to the dregs, and both you and your friends have been at a loss what to say next, and knew not how to fill up the time, yet the visit must go on, and time must be wasted. Sometimes the wind and the weather, and twenty insignificancies, or, what is much worse, scandal of persons or families, have come into your relief, that there might not be too long a silence: But not one word of God or goodness could find room to enter in, and relieve the dull hour. Is none of this time ever to be accounted for? And will it sound well in the ears of the great Judge, "We ran to these sorry topics, these slanderous and backbiting stories, because we could not tell what to talk of, and we knew not how to spend our time."

5. Have you not been guilty of frequent, and even perpetual delays or neglects of your proper necessary business in the civil life, or in the solemn duties of religion, by busying yourselves in some other needless thing, under this pretence, "It is time enough yet?"

Have you learned that important and eternal rule of prudence, "never delay till to-morrow what may be done to-day; never put off till the next hour what may be done in this?" Have you not often experienced your own disappointment and folly by these delays? And yet have you ever so repented, as to learn to mend them? Solomon tells us, Eccles. iii. 1. *There is a time for every purpose, and every work, under the sun;* a proper and agreeable time for every lawful work of nature and life; and it is the business and care of a wise man to do proper work in proper time; but when we have let slip the proper season, how often have we been utterly disappointed? Have we not sustained great inconveniences? And sometimes it hath so happened, that we could never do that work or business at all, because another proper season for it hath never offered: Time hath been no more. Felix put off his discourse with Paul about the *faith of Christ and righteousness, and judgment to come, to a more convenient time*, which probably never came, *Acts* xxiv. 25. And the word of God teaches us, that, if we neglect our salvation in the present day of grace, the angel, in my text, is ready to swear that *time shall be no longer*.

Here permit me to put in a short word to those who have lost much time already.

O my friends! begin now to do what in you lies to regain it, by double diligence, in the matters of your salvation, lest the voice of the archangel should finish your time of trial, and call you to judgment before you are prepared.

What time lies before you for this double improvement God only knows: The remnant of the measure of your days is with him, and every evening the number is diminished: Let not the rising sun upbraid you with continued negligence. Remember your former abuses of hours, and months, and years, in folly and sin, or, at best, in vanity and trifling: Let these thoughts of your past conduct lie with such an effectual weight on your hearts, as to keep you ever vigorous in present duty. Since you have been so lazy and loitering in your christian race in time past, take larger steps daily, and stretch all the powers of your souls to hasten towards the crown and the prize. Hearken to the voice of God, in his word, with stronger attention and zeal to profit: Pray to a long-suffering God with double fervency; cry aloud, and give him no rest, till your sinful soul is changed into penitence, and renewed to holiness, till you have some good evidences of

your sincere love to God, and unfeigned faith in his Son Jesus. Never be satisfied till you are come to a well-grounded hope, through grace, that God is your friend, your reconciled Father, that, when days and months are no more, you may enter into the region of everlasting light and peace.

But I proceed to the last general remark. "Learn the unspeakable happiness of those who have improved time well, and who wait for the end of time with christian hope." They are not afraid, or, at least, they need not be afraid, of the sentence nor the oath of this *mighty angel, when he lifts up his hand to heaven, and swears, with a loud voice, there shall be time no more.*

O blessed creatures! Who have so happily improved the time of life and day of grace, as to obtain the restoration of the image of God, in some degree, on their souls, and to recover the favour of God through the gospel of Christ, for which end time was bestowed upon them: They have reviewed their follies with shame in the land of hope; they have mourned and repented of sin, ere the season of repentance was past, and are become new creatures, and their lips and their lives declare the divine change. They have made preparation for death, for which purpose life and time were given. Happy souls, indeed, who have so valued time as not to let it run off in trifles, but have obtained treasures more valuable than that time which is gone, even the riches of the covenant of grace, and the hopes of an eternal inheritance in glory!

Happy such souls, indeed, when time is no more with them! Their happiness begins when the duration of their mortal life is finished. Let us survey this their happiness in a few particulars.

The time of their darknesses and difficulties is no longer: The time of painful ignorance and error is come to an end: You shall wander no more in mistake and folly; you shall behold all things in the light of God, and see him face to face, who is the original beauty, and the eternal truth. You shall see him without veils and shadows, without the reflecting glass of his word and ordinances, which at best gives us but a faint glimpse of him, either in his nature or wisdom, his power or goodness. You shall see him in himself, and in his Son Jesus, the brightest and fairest image of the Father, and *shall know him, as you are known;* 1 Cor. xiii. 10, 12.

There is no more time for temptation and danger: When once you are got beyond the limits of this visible world, and all the enticing objects of flesh and sense, there shall be no more hazard of your salvation, no more doubting and distressing fears about your interest in your Father's love, or in the salvation of his beloved Son.

There is no more time nor place for sin to inhabit in you: The lease of its habitation in your mortal body must end, when the body itself falls into the dust: You shall feel no more of its powerful and defiling operations, either in heart or life, for ever.

The time of conflict with your spiritual adversaries is no longer. There is no more warfare betwixt the flesh and spirit, no more combat with the world and the devil, who, by a thousand ways, have attempted to deceive you, and to bear you off from your heavenly hope. *Your warfare is accomplished, your victory is complete, you are made overcomers through him that has loved you. Death is the last enemy to be overcome; the sting of it is already taken away, and you have now finished the conquest, and are assured of the crown;* 1 Cor. xv. 56, 57.

The time of your *distance and absence from God is no more.* The time of coldness and indifference, and the fearful danger of backslidings, is no more: You shall be made as *pillars in the temple of your God, and shall go no more out:* He shall love you like a God, and kindle the flames of your love to so intense a degree, as is only known to angels, and to the spirits of the just made perfect.

There is no more time for you to be vexed with the *society of sinful creatures:* Your spirit within you shall be no more ruffled and disquieted with the teazing conversation of the wicked, nor shall you be interrupted in your holy and heavenly exercises by any of the enemies of God and his grace.

The time of your *painful labours and sufferings is no more.* Rev. xiv. 13. *Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, for they rest from all their labours* that carry toil or fatigue with them? *There shall be no more* complaints nor groans, *no sorrow or crying;* the springs of grief are for ever dried up, *neither shall there be any more pain* in the flesh or the spirit. *God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes,* and *death* shall be no more; Rev. xxi. 4.

It is finished, said our blessed Lord on the cross: It is finished, may every one of his followers say at the hour of death, and at the end of time: My sins and follies, my distresses and my sufferings, are finished for ever, and the mighty angel swears to it, that the time of these evils is no longer; they are vanished, and shall never return. O happy souls, who have been so wise to count the short and uncertain number of your days on earth, as to make an early provision for a removal to heaven! Blessed are you above all the powers of present thought and language. Days, and months, and years, and all these short and painful periods of time, shall be swallowed up in a long and blissful eternity; the stream of time which has run between the banks of this mortal life, and bore you along amidst many dangerous rocks of temptation, fear, and sorrow, shall launch you out into the ocean of pleasures which have no period: Those felicities must be everlasting, for duration has no limit there; time, with all its measures, *shall be no more.* Amen.

DEDICATION.

TO

THE LADY ABNEY, MOTHER OF THE DECEASED,

AND TO

MRS. MARY AND MRS. ELIZABETH ABNEY,

HER TWO SURVIVING SISTERS.

MADAM,

IF sorrows could be diminished in proportion to the multitude of those who share in them, the spring of your tears would have been drawn almost dry, and the tide of grief have sunk low, by being divided into a thousand streams. But though this cannot afford perfect relief to your Ladyship, yet it must be some consolation to have been blessed with a daughter, whose removal from our world could give occasion for so general a mourning.

I confess, Madam, the wound which was made by such a smarting stroke is not to be healed in a day or two, reason permits some risings of the softer and kinder passions in such a season; it shews at least that our hearts are not marble, and reveals the tender ingredients that are moulded up in our frame; nor does religion permit us to be insensible when a God afflicts, though he doth it with the hand of a father and a friend. Nature and love are full of these sensibilities, and incline you to miss her presence in every place where she was wont to attend you, and where you rejoiced in her as one of your dearest blessings. She is taken away indeed from mortal sight, and to follow her remains to the grave, and to dwell there, gives but a dark and melancholy view, till the great rising-day. Faith may discern the distant prospect, and exult in the sight of that glorious futurity; yet I think there is also a nearer relief, Madam, to your sorrows. By the virtues which shone in her life, you may trace the ascent of her spirit to the world of immortality and joy. Could your Ladyship keep the eye of your soul directed thither, you would find it an effectual balm for a heart that bleeds at the painful remembrance of her death.—What could your Ladyship have asked as a higher favour of heaven, than to have borne and trained up a child for that glorious inheritance, and to have her secured of the possession beyond all possible fear or danger of losing it.

This, Madam, is your own divinest hope for yourself, and you are hastening on toward that blessed society, as fast as days and hours give leave. When your thoughts descend to this lower world again, there are two living comforts near you, of the same kind with what you have lost: May your Ladyship rejoice in them yet many years, and they in you! And when Jesus, who hath the keys of death, and the invisible state, shall appoint the hour for your ascent to heaven, may you leave them behind to bless the world with

fair examples of virtue and piety among men, and a long train of services for the interest of their Redeemer.

If I were to say any thing, young ladies, to you in particular, it should be in the language of our Saviour, and his beloved apostle, *Hold fast what you have till the Lord comes, that none may deprive you of your crown. Take heed to yourselves, that you lose not the things which you have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward.* Go on, and persevere, as you have begun, in the path of true religion and happiness: And, in this age of infidelity and degenerate life, be ye daily more established in the christian faith and practice, in opposition to the smiles, and frowns, and every snare of a vain delusive world. Let this one thought set a double guard upon you, that while your elder sister was with you, it was something easier to resist every temptation, when she had pronounced the first refusal: Her steadiness was a guard, which you have now lost, but you have an almighty God in covenant on your side, and *the grace of our Lord Jesus is sufficient for you.*

To his care, my Lady, I commend yourself, and your whole family, with affectionate petitions, and am,

MADAM,

Your Ladyship's most obliged,

And faithful servant,

I. WATTS.

London, April 28, 1732.

DISCOURSE II.

THE WATCHFUL CHRISTIAN DYING IN PEACE.

A FUNERAL SERMON, OCCASIONED BY THE DECEASE OF MRS. SARAH ABNEY, DAUGHTER OF THE LATE SIR THOMAS ABNEY, KNT. PREACHED APRIL 2, 1732.

IT is an awful providence, which hath lately removed from among us a young person, well known to most of you, whose agreeable temper and conduct had gained the esteem of all her acquaintance; whose constitution of body, together with the furniture of her mind, and circumstances in the world, concurred to promise many future years of life and usefulness. But all that is born of the race of man is frail and mortal, and all that is done by the hand of God is wise and holy. We mourn, and we submit in silence. Yet the providence hath a voice in it; and the friends of the deceased are very solicitous, that such an unexpected and instructive appearance of death might be religiously improved to the benefit of the living. For this end, I am desired to entertain you at present with some meditations on those words of our Saviour, which you read in

LUKE xii. 37.

BLESSED ARE THOSE SERVANTS, WHOM THE LORD, WHEN HE COMETH, SHALL FIND WATCHING.

VARIOUS, and well chosen, are those parables, whereby our Saviour gave warning to his disciples, that when he was departed from this world, they should ever be upon their guard, and always in a readiness to receive him at his return; because he would come on a sudden, and *in such an hour as they thought not*, to demand an account of their behaviour, and to distribute his recompences according to their works. There are two of these parables in this chapter: But to enter into a detail of all the particular metaphors which relate to this one, whence I have borrowed my text, would be too tedious here, and would spend too much of the present hour. Without any longer preface, therefore, I shall apply myself to improve the words to our spiritual profit in the following method:

I. I shall enquire, what is meant by the coming of Christ in the text, and how it may be properly applied to our present purpose, or the hour of death.

II. I shall consider, what is implied in the watchfulness which our Saviour recommends.

III. I propose some considerations, which will discover the blessedness of the watchful soul in a dying hour.

IV. I shall add some practical remarks.

First, Let us enquire, what is meant by the coming of Christ in my text.

The coming of Christ, in some of these parables, may have reference to his speedy appearance, in the course of his providence, in that very age, to judge and punish the

Jewish nation, to destroy their city, and put an end to their church and state, for their many heinous iniquities, and the most provoking crime of rejecting and crucifying the Son of God. But these words, in their supreme and most important sense, always point to the *glorious appearance of Christ* at the last day, when he shall come to shut up all the scenes of this frail life, to put an end to the present world, to finish all the works of this mortal state, and to decide and determine the eternal states of all mankind by the general judgment.

Yet Christ comes to each of us in the hour of death also, for *he hath the keys of death and of hell*, or of the invisible world; *Rev.* i. 18. It is he who appoints the very moment when the soul shall be dismissed from this flesh; he opens the doors of the grave for the dying body, and he is Lord of the world of spirits, and lets in new inhabitants every minute into those unseen regions of immortal sorrow, or immortal peace. And as Christ may be said to come to us by the message or summons of death, so the many solemn writings and commands of watchfulness, which attend these parables of Christ, have been usually, and with good reason, applied to the hour of death also, for then the Lord comes to shut up the scene of each of our lives, our works are then finished, our last day is come, and the world is then at an end with us.

Let it be observed also, that there is a further parallel between the day of the general judgment, and that of our own death: The one will as certainly come as the other; but the time when Christ will come, in either of these senses, is unknown to us, and uncertain; And it is this which renders the duty of perpetual watchfulness so necessary to all men. The parable assures us that our Lord will certainly come, but whether *at the second, or third watch, whether at midnight, or at cock-crowing, or near the morning*, this is all uncertainty; yet whensoever he comes, he expects we should have *our loins girded*, like servants fit for business, and *our lamps burning*, to attend him at the door, and that we be ready to receive him as soon as he knocks.

Were the appointed hour of judgment, or of death, made known to us for months or years beforehand, we should be ready to think constant watchfulness a very needless thing. Mankind would persuade themselves to indulge their foolish and sinful slumbers, and only take care to rub their eyes a little, and bestir themselves an hour or two before this awful event: But it is the suddenness and uncertainty of the coming of Christ to all mankind for either of these purposes, that extends the charge of watchfulness to all men, as well as to the apostles; *Mark* xiii. 37. and that calls upon us aloud to keep our souls ever awake, lest, as our Lord there expresses it, *lest, coming suddenly, he should find us sleeping.* And remember this, that if we are unprepared to meet the Lord at death, we can never be ready when he comes to judgment: Peace and blessedness attend the watchful christian, whensoever his Lord cometh. *Blessed is that servant, whom, when his Lord cometh, he shall find watching.* This leads me to the second general head.

Secondly, What is implied in watchfulness.

Answer. In general, it is opposed to sleeping, as I have already hinted, in *Mark* xiii. 35, 36. And, in the language of scripture, as well as in common speech, sleep and slumber denote an unpreparedness to receive whatever comes, for this is the case with those who are asleep: On the other hand, watchfulness is a preparation and readiness for every event, and so it is expressed in some of these parables, verse 40. *Be ye therefore ready.* But to enter into a few particulars.

1. There is a sleep of death; *Psalm* xiii. 3. Spiritual death, as well as natural, is sometimes called a sleep. Such is the case of a soul *dead in trespasses and sins;* Eph. v. 14. compared with ii. 1. *Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.*

Watchfulness, therefore, implies life, a principle of spiritual life in the soul: Surely those who are *dead in sins*, are not prepared to receive their Lord: He is a perfect stranger to them, they know him not, they love him not, they obey him not; and a terrible stranger he will be, if he come upon them before they are awake. But those who are awakened by divine grace into a spiritual life, have seen something of the *glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ;* they are acquainted with their Lord, they love him, and have some degree of preparation to meet their Saviour, when he summons them to leave this world. This is, therefore, a matter of highest consequence, that we awake from a state of sin and death, that we be made alive to God, begin the christian life, and set upon religion in good earnest, according to the rules of the gospel, before Christ calls us away. It is only this divine life begun in us, that can secure us from eternal death; though even christians may be found slumbering in other respects, and expose themselves to painful evils, if that hour surprise them at unawares.

2. There is a sleep of indolence and thoughtlessness: When a man is insensible of his own circumstances, and too careless of the things which most concern him, we say, "the man is asleep." Such a sleep seems to be upon the church of Israel; Isaiah xxix. 10, 11. *a spirit of deep sleep*, when the law, which contained the great things of God, and their salvation, was to them as *a sealed book*, they read it not, their eyes were closed, their spiritual senses were bound up. Many a christian, who hath been raised from a death in sin, has been seized with this criminal slumber, and has had the image of death come again upon him: He has grown too careless and unconcerned about his most important and eternal affairs; and in this temper he hardly knows what his state is toward God, nor keeps up a lively sense or notice of divine and eternal things upon his spirit. Watchfulness, in opposition to this sleep, implies a holy solicitude and diligence to know our own spiritual state; a consciousness of what we are; a keeping all the spiritual senses in proper exercise, and maintaining a lively perception of divine things. It implies an acute, painful sense of indwelling sin, and the irregular propensities of the heart, a delightful relish of heavenly objects, frequent thoughts of death and eternity, constant waiting for those awful events, with a quick apprehension and resentment of all things that help or hinder the spiritual life. This is the character of a wakeful christian, and such a one as is ready to receive his returning Lord.

3. There is a sleep of security and foolish peace, when a person is not apprehensive of imminent danger, and is much unguarded against it. Such was the sleep of Jonah in the storm, of Samson on the lap of Delilah, when *the Philistines were upon him*, and of the disciples, when Judas and the band of soldiers were just ready to seize their Master. This is the case of many a slumbering christian: He is not upon his guard against his inward lusts and passions, nor against those outward temptations and perils to which he is continually exposed, while he dwells in flesh and blood. Watchfulness, in this respect, is when a christian hath his eyes open, and turns them round on every side, to foresee approaching evil, and prevent it; when he is prepared for every assault of every adversary, whether sin or the world, whether death or the devil; he hath his spiritual armour girt upon him, and is ready for the combat. He is every hour guarding

against the powers of the flesh, and watching against its allurements and attractions, lest he be defiled thereby, and unfit to meet his returning Lord: He is daily loosening his heart from all sensual attachments, and weaning himself from the world and creatures, because he knows he must quickly take his long farewel, and part with them all at the call and appointment of his great Master. He is like a centinel upon his watch-tower, ever awake, because dangers stand thick around him.

4. There is a sleep of sloth and inactivity; Prov. xix. 15. *Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep. A little more sleep, a little more slumber,* saith the lazy christian, *who turns upon his bed, as the door upon its hinges,* and makes no progress or advance in his way to heaven. We are sleepy christians, when we do little for God, or our own souls, in comparison of the vast work and important varieties of duty that lie upon us: When our zeal is cold, and our efforts of service slight and feeble: When the light of grace shines so dim, and the spark of holiness is so covered with ashes, that it is hard to say whether it burn or no. As in natural things, so in spiritual, it is a difficult matter sometimes to distinguish between a dead man and a lethargic sleeper. Watchfulness, in opposition to this slumber, is a lively and vigorous exercise of every grace, and a diligent attendance on every duty, both toward God and man, a constant converse with heaven by daily devotion, an active zeal for God in the world, a steady faith in the promises, a joyful hope of heavenly blessedness, a longing expectation of the returning Saviour, which makes the soul stretch out the wings of desire and joy, as though it were going forth to meet him. This is the meaning of the apostle Peter's expression; 2 Peter iii. 12. *Looking for, and hastening to the coming of the day of God.*

Put all these things together now, and they make up the character of a watchful christian: He is awake from the sleep of death, and made spiritually alive; he hath the work of vital religion begun in his heart. He is awake from the sleep of thoughtlessness and indolence; he is solicitous to know his own state, and hath good hope through grace; he lives in the view of heavenly things, and keeps his eye open to future and eternal glories. He is awake from the sleep of security, he is upon his guard against every danger, and ready to receive every alarm. He is awake from the sleep of slothfulness, and is active in the pursuit of the glory of his God, and his own eternal interest, and still *pressing toward the mark to obtain the prize.* This is the soul that is ready to meet a returning Saviour, and to meet his Lord when he comes, either at the hour of death, or to the general judgment.

Thirdly, Let me propose some special considerations, which discover the blessedness of the watchful christian at the hour of death.

Consideration I. That moment dispossesses us of every enjoyment of flesh and blood, and divides us from the commerce of this visible world; but the wakeful christian is happy, for he is ready to be thus divided and dispossessed. Death breaks the band at once between us and all the sensible things round about us, by dissolving the frame of this body, which had united us to them; and the watchful saint is content to have that bond broken, these unions dissolved. His heart and soul are not torn away from the dear delights of this mortal state with that pain, anguish, and horror, that attend the sinner, when death summons him off the stage, and divides him from his fleshly idols. The christian hath been untying his heart, by degrees, from the dearest delights of sense, and disengaging it from all that is not immortal: With holy pleasure he can bid farewel to sun, moon, and stars, and to all things which their light can shew him, for he is going

to a world, where the sun of righteousness ever shines in unclouded glory, and discovers such sights as are infinitely superior to all that the eyes of flesh can behold: He can part with friends and kindred with a composed spirit, for he is going to meet better friends, and diviner kindred, as we shall shew immediately: He can leave his dying flesh behind him, and commit it to the dust, in joyful hope of the great rising day, and he hath a better mansion at present provided for him on high in his Father's house, while he lives far separate from all earthly dwellings; 2 Cor. v. 1. *We know, that if this earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God—not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

II. The moment of death finishes our state of trial, and fixes us unchangeably in the state of sin or holiness, in which we are then found; and blessed is the watchful christian, for he is prepared to have his trial thus ended, and his state thus fixed, and made unchangeable. *As the tree falls, so it lies, whether to the north or the south;* Eccles. xi. 3. As the soul parts from the body, so it remains, whether fitted for heaven or hell. It is therefore a matter of the last importance, to be prepared and ready for such an eternal sentence and unchangeable determination. Were any of us to be surprised some moment this day, and forced to continue all our lives in that very posture of body in which we are then found, should we not be awake, and keep ourselves in the most natural and easy gestures all that day, lest we be seized at once, and fixed in some distorted, painful, and uneasy situation all our months and years to come? Or, if we were to be bound down to one single thought or passion all the remnant of our life, in which we were found in any uncertain minute in this hour, should we not watch with utmost care, and guard against every unpleasing thought, and every fretful and vexing passion, lest it should be fixed upon us till we die?

Now this is the case at death: The almighty voice of God then pronounces, *He that is unclean and unholy, must for ever be unholy and unclean; but he that is righteous, let him be righteous still, and he that is holy, shall be for ever holy;* Rev. xxii. 11. I will not precisely determine, that this is the sense of that text; yet since the apostle speaks there concerning the coming of Christ, it may be very applicable to the present case. Now, how dreadful soever this thought is to a guilty, sinful creature, it is no terror to a wakeful christian: He is ready to have these words pronounced from heaven, for they will establish him in eternal holiness and eternal peace: He hath endeavoured to secure to himself an interest in the love of God, through the faith and love of Jesus the blessed Mediator, and at death he is fixed for ever in their love. He hath loved God in time, and in this visible world, and there is nothing in all the unseen worlds, nothing through all the ages of eternity, *shall ever separate him from the love of God in Christ Jesus.* The moment of death hath fixed him for ever a holy and beloved soul, beyond the power of creatures to change his temper, or his state. This is the blessedness of the watchful christian.

III. Death sets us, in a more immediate and sensible manner, in the presence of God, a glorious and holy God, *God the Judge of all;* and blessed is the watchful christian, for he is willing to stand before this God, to be brought into his presence: This is what he hath longed and prayed for, to be for ever with God. It is the blessedness that he hath sought with incessant labours and tears, with holy diligence and daily devotion, and blessed is the *pure in heart,* who hath watched against the pollutions of the world, *for he shall see God;* Matt. v. 8.

It is certain, that when the soul departs from the body, *it returns to God, who gave it;*

Eccles. xii. 7. And probably to God, as a Judge too; Heb. ix. 27. *after death, judgment.* There is some sort of determination of the state of each single person at death, before the great and general judgment-day, because that day is appointed rather for the public vindication of the equity of God, in his distribution of rewards and punishments, and is particularly put into the hands of our Lord Jesus: Now, since the separate soul *returns to God, who gave it*, it is of vast importance, that we be then prepared to come before him.

Some of us here would be mightily afraid of appearing before a prince, or a great and honourable person in an undress; but for our souls, in a naked state, or in a garment of sinful pollution, to be surprised by the great and holy God, to be set on a sudden in his presence, what terror is contained in this thought! Now the watchful christian hath this blessedness, that he is washed, from his defilements, in the blood of the Lamb, *he is clothed with the robe of righteousness, and the garments of salvation;* Isaiah lxi. 10. He is prepared to appear before a God of infinite holiness without terror, for he is made like him, he bears his image, he appears as one of his children, and he is not afraid to see his Father.

However some commentators may confine and impoverish the sense of David, in the end of the xvii. Psalm, yet, I am persuaded, the Spirit of God in him designed to express his faith and joy, either at the hour of death, or in the morning of the resurrection, *I shall behold thy face in righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness:* When the Psalmist had described, what were the satisfactions of the men of this world in death, verse 14. *viz.* that they had filled their houses with children, and leave their substance, or riches to them, he then declares what was his support and hope in his dying hour, " As for me, saith he, I have other views: I am not afraid, O my God, to appear before thee in the other world, for I shall see thy face, not as a criminal, but as a person approved, and accepted, and righteous in thy sight: I shall awake from this world of dreams and shadows, into thy complete image, and perfect holiness; or I shall awake from the dust of death, and shall be fully satisfied; and rejoice to find myself made so like my God, and to dwell for ever in his presence."

IV. It is the Lord Jesus Christ that lets the soul out of the body, for *he hath the keys of death, and of the unseen world,* and blessed is the watchful christian, who waits for the coming of his Lord, for he can meet him gladly when fulfilling this part of his glorious office. He shall be introduced by him into the presence of God his Father, and shall receive most condescending instances of mercy from Christ himself. See the text; *Luke* xii. 36, 37. *Be ye yourselves like men, that wait for the Lord, that, when he cometh, and knocketh, ye may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching: Verily, I say to you, he shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and come forth, and serve them.* He shall condescend, as it were, even below the office of a steward, he shall bring out the heavenly provisions of his Father's house, and make them sit down in his kingdom, and give them divine refreshments after their labours; he shall feed them as a shepherd, *shall lead them to living fountains of waters,* and afford them his presence for ever.

The watchful christian is blessed indeed, when he shall be *absent from the body,* and be at once *present with the Lord;* 2 Cor. v. 8. The Lord Jesus, whom he hath seen by faith in his gospel, whose voice he hath heard in his word, and obeyed it; Jesus, whom he hath touched, and tasted in the appointed emblems of his supper on earth, in whom he hath believed through the word of grace, and whom he hath loved before he saw him,

shall now receive him into his presence, and the disciple shall rejoice for ever to meet his Lord *with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.*

V. At the hour of death we are sent at once into an invisible world, we shall find ourselves in the midst of holy or of unclean spirits; borne away at once into an unknown region, and into the midst of unknown inhabitants, the nations of the saved, or the crowds of damned souls; and blessed is the watchful christian, for he is ready to enter into the unseen regions: He knows he shall not be placed among those, whose company and whose character he never loved here on earth; "his soul shall not be gathered with sinners, nor his dwelling be with the workers of iniquity;" *Psalm* xvi. 3. but with *the saints, the excellent in the earth, in whom was all his delight,* xxvi. 9. Every one, when dismissed from the prison of this body, must go as the apostles did, when released from the prison of Jerusalem, *to their own company;* Acts iv. 23. Judas the traitor went *to his own place;* Acts i. 25. And the watchful christian will be disposed among *spirits of the just made perfect,* he will find himself in that blessed society at his dismission from flesh and blood. Read, and see, what a glorious society it is; Heb. xii. 22, 23. *To the innumerable company of angels, the general assembly and church of the first-born, who are written in heaven, to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant.* The apostle says, we are come to them already, that is, by the covenant of grace, as administered under the gospel, we are brought into a blessed union with them, in spirit and in temper, even in this life, we are members of the same body, we are united to the same head, and made parts of the same household, though we are not yet brought home: But at death we are actually present with them, and dwell and converse among them with holy familiarity, as citizens of the same heavenly Jerusalem, as parts of the same sacred family, and at home, as children of the same God, and in their Father's house. The watchful christian is at once carried into the midst of the blessed world by ministering angels, the world where Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob dwell, and made a speedy partaker of their blessedness; *Luke* xvi. 22.

VI. Death brings with it a most amazing and inconceivable change of all our present circumstances and thoughts, our actions and pursuits, our sensations and enjoyments, I mean all those that relate to this life only, such as eating, drinking, buying, selling, &c. It dislodges us from these bodies, and thereby finishes all those affections, concerns, and labours which belong to the body, and sends us into another sort of world, whose affairs and concerns are such only as belong to spirits, whether sinful or holy: A most delightful, or a most dreadful change! A world of unknown sorrows, or unknown happiness! Luke xxiii. 43. *This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.* Luke xvi. 22. *The rich man died—and in hell he lift up his eyes.* And, indeed, the change is so vast, that, comparatively speaking, we know not what sorrow or happiness is till this day comes. Now it is a very foolish and dangerous thing, at best, to pass into such an extreme change of states infinitely worse, or infinitely better, while we are asleep and at all uncertainties: What if it should be the miserable state, and we should awake in hell? But the watchful christian is blessed, for he is ready for this amazing change. He hath long lived upon it by faith and hope, though he knows not so well what the particular enjoyments of heaven are; and he is well satisfied, that he is prepared for that happy world by God himself. 2 Cor. v. 5. *He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God:* He is well pleased to have his faith changed into sight, and his hope into fruition: He hath been long pained and burdened

in this sinful world with the vain trifles, the poor low cares and amusements of it; the sins, and sorrows, and temptations that surround him in it, give him continual disquietudes, and he hath been training up in the school of Christ, by devotion and good works, for those higher services of heaven. Since he can trust the promises of the gospel, and has had some small foretaste of these pleasures, he knows that the actions and employments, the businesses and the joys of the upper world, are incomparably superior to any thing here on earth, and free from all the uneasy and defiling circumstances of this life. He is awake to receive this change: He rejoices in his removal from world to world: His vital and active powers are ready for the business of paradise, and he opens his heart to take in the joy.

VII. Death makes its approaches oftentimes, and seizes us in such a manner, as to give no room for prayers or repentance; then the blessedness of the watchful soul appears, that if he is carried out of the world and time in such a surprising way, he is safe for eternity.

Sometimes the messenger of death stops all our thoughts and actions at once by a lethargic stroke, or confounds them all by the delirious rovings of a fever; the light of reason is eclipsed and darkened, the powers of the mind are all obstructed, or the languishings of nature have so enfeebled them, that either we cannot exercise them to any spiritual purposes, or we are forbid to do it, for fear of counterworking the physician, increasing the malady, and hastening our death. Thus we are not capable of making any new preparation for the important work of dying; we can make use of none of the means of grace, nor do any thing more to secure an interest in the love of God, the salvation of Christ, and the blessings of heaven.

This is a very dismal thought indeed. But the watchful christian hath this blessedness, that he is fit to receive the sentence of death in any form; nor lethargies, nor deliriums, nor languors of nature, can destroy the seed of grace and religion in the heart, which were sown there in the days of health; nor can any of the formidable attendants of death cancel his former transactions with God and Christ about his immortal concerns. That great and momentous work was done before death appeared, or any of its attendants. He was not so unwise, as to leave matters of infinite importance at that dreadful hazard: He is not now to begin to seek after a lost God, nor to begin his repentance for past sins: He is not now a stranger at the throne of grace, nor beginning to learn to pray: He is not now commencing his acquaintance with Jesus Christ, his Saviour, in the midst of a tumult and hurry of thoughts and fears; nor are the works of faith, and love, and holiness, to be now begun. Dreadful work indeed, and infinitely hazardous! To begin to be convinced of sin on the borders of death, and to make our first enquiries after God and heaven upon the very brink of hell! To begin to ask for pardon, when we can live in sin no longer; to cry out, Jesus, save me, when the waves of the wrath of God are breaking in upon the drowning soul! Hopeless condition, and extreme wretchedness! To have all the hard work of conversion to go through under the sinkings of feeble nature, and to begin the exercises of virtue and godliness under the wild disorders of reason! What a madness is it to leave our infinite concerns at such a horrible uncertainty!

Here this Discourse may be divided.

But these are not thy circumstances, O wakeful christian! Nor was this the case of our young departed friend, though her distemper soon discomposed her reasoning powers, and gave her very little opportunity to make a present preparation for dying. But she had heard the voice of Christ in his gospel betimes, *and awoke to righteousness* at his call, that she might be always ready for his summons in death. Religion was her early care, a fear to offend God possessed and governed her thoughts and actions from her childhood, and heavenly things were her youthful choice. She had appeared for some years in the public profession of christianity, and maintained the practice of godliness in the church and the world; but it began much more early in secret. Her beloved closet, and her retiring hours, were silent witnesses of her daily converse with God and her Saviour: There she devoted her soul to her Creator betimes, according to the encouragements and rules of the gospel of Christ, and there she found peace and salvation. It was there she made a conscientious recollection of the sermons she heard in public from her tender years, and left behind her these fruits of her memory, and her pen, to attest what improvements she gained in knowledge by the ministrations of the word; and her cabinet has now discovered to us another set of memoirs, wherein she continually observed what advances she might make in real piety, by those weekly seasons of grace.

It was under these influences she maintained a most dutiful and affectionate behaviour to her honoured parents, and with filial fondness, mingled with esteem, submission, and reverence, paid her constant regards to the lady, her mother, in her widowed estate. It was by the united principles of grace and nature, she lived with her younger sisters in uncommon harmony and friendship, as though one heart and soul animated them all. It was under these influences she ever stood upon her guard, amongst all the innocent freedoms of life; and though she did not immure herself in the walls of a mother's house, but indulged a just curiosity to learn some of the forms of the world, the magnificence of courts, and the grandeurs of life, yet she knew how far to appear among them, and when to retire. Nor did she forbid herself all the polite diversions of youth, agreeable to her rank; nor did reason, or religion, or her superior relatives, forbid her; yet she was still awake to secure all that belongs to honour and virtue; nor did she use to venture to the utmost bounds of what sobriety and religion might allow. Danger of guilt stands near the extreme limits of innocence.

Shall I let this paper inform the world, with what friendly decency she treated her young companions and acquaintance; how far from indulging the modish liberties of scandal on the absent; how much she hated those scornful and derisive airs, which persons on higher ground too often assume toward those who are seated in the inferior ranks of life? Is it proper, I should say, how much her behaviour won upon the esteem of all that knew her, though I could appeal to the general sorrow at her death, to confirm the truth of it? But who can forbear, on this occasion, to take notice how far she acquired that lovely character, in her narrow and private sphere, which seems almost to have been derived to her, by inheritance, from her honoured father deceased, who had the tears of his country long dropping upon his tomb, and whose memory yet lives in a thousand hearts.

Such a conversation, and such a character, made up of piety and virtue, were prepared for the attacks of a fever, with malignant and mortal symptoms. Slow and unsuspected were the advances of the disease, till the powers of reason began to falter and retire, till the heralds of death had made their appearance, and spread on her bosom

their purple ensigns. When these disorders began, her lucid intervals were longer; and, while she thought no person was near, she could address herself to God, and say, how often she had given herself to him; she hoped she had done it sincerely, and found acceptance with him, and trusted that she was not deceived. The gleams of reason, that broke in between the clouds, gave her light enough to discern her own evidences of piety, and refresh her hope. Then she repeated some of the last verses of the cxxxix. *Psalm* in metre, *viz.*

"Lord, search my soul, try every thought:
Though my own heart accuse me not
Of walking in a false disguise,
I beg the trial of thy eyes."

"Doth secret mischief lurk within?
Do I indulge some unknown sin?
O turn my feet whene'er I stray,
And lead me in thy perfect way."

She was frequent and importunate in her requests for the Psalm-book, that she might read that psalm, or, at least, have it read to her throughout; and it was with some difficulty we persuaded her to be composed in silence; thus sincerely willing was she, that God might search and try her heart, still hoping well concerning her spiritual state, yet still solicitous about the assurance of her own sincerity in her former transactions with heaven.

The next day, among the rovings of her thoughts, she rehearsed all those verses of the xvii. *Psalm*, which are paraphrased in the same book, with very little faltering in a line or two.

"Lord, I am thine; but thou wilt prove
My faith, my patience, and my love," &c.

The traces of her thoughts, under this confusion of animal nature, retained something in them divine and heavenly. O blessed situation of soul, when we stand prepared for death, though it come with the formidable retinue of a disordered brain and clouded reason! It would be too long, at present, to represent to you the sad consequences of being found asleep, when Christ comes to call us away from this world; I shall therefore only make these three reflections:

I. "None can begin too early *to awake to righteousness*, and prepare for the call of Christ, since no one is too young to be sent for by his messenger of death." I do not here speak of the state of infancy, when persons can hardly be said to be in a personal state of trial: But when I say, none can awake too early to mind the things of religion, I mean after reason begins its proper exercise, and this appears sometimes in early childhood. All our life in this world, compared with heaven, is a sort of night, and season of darkness; and if our Lord summon us away in *the first watch of the night*, in the midst of youth and vigour, and the pleasing allurements of flesh and sense, we are in a deplorable state if we are found sleeping, and hurried away from earth into the invisible world, in the midst of our foolish dreams of golden vanity. Dreadful indeed, to have a young thoughtless creature carried off the stage sleeping, and dead in trespasses and sins! Let those that are drunk with wine *fall asleep upon the top of a mast*, in the middle of the sea, where the winds and the waves are tossing and roaring all

around them; let a madman, who has lost his reason, lie down to sleep upon the edge of a precipice, where a pit of fire and brimstone is burning beneath him, and ready to receive his fall; but let not young sinners, whose rational powers are in exercise, and whose life is every moment a mere uncertainty, venture to go on in their dangerous slumbers, while the wrath of God, and eternal misery, attend them, if they die before they are awake.

It is granted, that no power beneath that which is divine, can effectually quicken a dead soul, and awaken it into a divine life. It is the work of God to *quicken the dead;* Rom. iv. 17. Eph. ii. 5. It is the Son of God, who is *the light and life of the world;* John i. 4. to whom "the Father hath given this quickening power;" *John* v. 26. He calls sinners, to awaken them from their deadly sleep; *Eph.* v. 14. And *they live by him, as he lives by the Father;* John vi. 57. He awakens dead souls to life by the same *living Spirit, which shall quicken their mortal bodies, and raise them from the grave;* Rom. viii. 9, 11, 13. 2 Cor. iii. 3. which Spirit he "hath received from the Father;" *John* iii. 34. And on this account, we are to seek the vital influences of this grace from heaven, by constant and importunate prayer. Yet in my text, as well as in other scriptures, awaking out of sleep, and watching unto righteousness, is represented as our duty; and we are to exert all our natural powers with holy fervency for this end, while our daily petitions draw down from heaven the promised aids of grace. Our diligence in duty, and our dependence on the divine power and mercy, are happily and effectually joined in the command of our Saviour on this very occasion, in one of his parables; Mark xiii. 33. *Watch and pray, for ye know not when the time is, that the Lord will come.* And again, chapter xiv. 38. *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.* Trust not in your own strength and sufficiency, for the glorious change to be wrought in your sinful hearts, and yet neglect not your own labours and restless endeavours, under a pretence that it is God's work, and not yours. *Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light;* Eph. v. 14.

Nor should frail dying creatures, in their youngest years, delay this work one day, nor one hour, since the consequences of being found asleep, when Christ calls, are terrible indeed. We are beset with mortality all around us; the seeds of disease and dissolution are working within us from our very birth and cradle, ever since sin entered into our natures; and we should ever be in readiness to remove hence, since we are never secure from the summons of heaven, the stroke of death, and the demands of the grave.

There was a lovely boy, the son of the Shunamite, who was given to his mother in a miraculous way; and when he was in the field among the reapers, he cried out, *My head, my head;* he was carried home immediately, and in a few hours died in his mother's bosom; 2 *Kings* iv. 18. Who would have imagined, that head-ach should have been death, and that in so short a time too? This is almost the case which we lament at present; the head-ach was sent but a few days before, nor was the pain very intense, nor the appearance dangerous, yet it became the fatal, though unexpected forerunner of death.

This providence is an awful warning-piece to all her young acquaintance, to be ready for a sudden removal; for she was of a healthy make, and seemed to stand at as great distance from the gates of death, as any of you: But the firmest constitution of human nature is born with death in it. From every age, and every spot of ground, and every

moment of time, there are short and sudden ways of descent to the grave. Trap-doors, if I may use so low a metaphor, are always under us, and a thousand unseen avenues to the regions of the dead. A malignant fever strikes the strongest nature with a mortal blast, at the command of the great author and disposer of life. My youngest hearers may be called away from the earth by the next pain that seizes them. Nothing but religion, early religion, and sincere godliness, can give you hope in youthful death, or leave a fragrant savour on your name or memory among those that survive.

II. If such blessedness, as I have described, belong to every watchful christian at the hour of death, then it may not be improper here to take notice of "some peculiar advantages, which attend those who shake off the deadly sleep of sin in their younger years, and are awake early to God and religion."

1. They have much fewer sins to mourn over on a death-bed, and they prevent much bitter repentance for youthful iniquities. Holy Job was a man of distinguished piety, and God himself pronounces of him, *that there was none like him in all the earth;* Job i. 18. but it is a question, whether his most early days were devoted to God, and whether he was so watchful over his behaviour in that dangerous season of life, for he makes a heavy complaint in his addresses to God; Job. xiii. 26. *Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth.* The sooner we begin to be awake to holiness, the more of these follies and sorrows are prevented: Happy those, who have the fewest of them to embitter their following lives, or make a death-bed painful!

2. Young persons have fewer attachments to the world, and the persons and things of it, which are round about them, and are more ready to part with it when their souls are united to God by an early faith and love. They have not yet entered into so numerous engagements of life, nor dwelt long enough here to have their hearts grown so fast on to creatures, which usually make the parting stroke so full of anguish and smarting sorrow. A child can much more easily ascend to heaven, and leave a parent behind, without that tender and painful solicitude, which a dying parent has for the welfare of a surviving child. The surrender of all mortal interests at the call of God, is much more easy when our souls are not tied to them by so many strings, nor united by so many of the softer endearments of nature, and where grace has taught us to practise an early weaning from all temporal comforts, and a little loosened our hearts from them by the faith of things eternal.

3. Those that have been awake by times to godliness, give peculiar honours to the gospel at death, and leave this testimony to the divine religion of Jesus, that it was able to subdue passion and appetite in that season of life, when they are usually strongest and most unruly. They give peculiar credit and glory to the christian name, and the gospel, which has gained them so many victories over the enemies of their salvation, at that age wherein multitudes are the captives of sin, and slaves to folly and vanity.

4. Those christians, who are awake to God in their early years, leave more happy and powerful examples of living and dying to their young companions and acquaintance. It is the temper of every age of life, to be more influenced and affected by the practice of persons of the same years. Sin has fewer excuses to make, in order to shield itself from the reproof of such examples, who have renounced it betimes; and virtue carries with it a more effectual motive to persuade young sinners to piety and goodness, when it can point to its votaries of the same age, and in the same circumstances of life. "Why

may not this be practised by you, as well as by your companions round about you, of the same age?" But I must hasten to the last reflection.

III. "When we mourn the death of friends, who were prepared for an early summons, let their preparation be our support." Blessed be God, they were not found sleeping! While we drop our tears upon the grave of any young christian who was awake and alive to God, that blessedness which Christ himself pronounces upon them, is a sweet cordial to mingle with our bitter sorrows, and will greatly assist to dry up the spring of them. The idea of their piety, and their approbation in the sight of God, is a balm to heal the wound, and give present ease to the heart-ach.

We are ready to run over their virtues, and spread abroad their amiable qualities in our thoughts, and then, with seeming reason, we give a loose to the mournful passion; whereas all these, when set in a true light, are real ingredients towards our relief.

We lament the loss of our departed friend, when we review that capacious and uncommon power of memory which the God of nature had given her, and which was so well furnished with a variety of human and divine knowledge, and was stored with a rich treasure of the word of God, so that if providence had called her into a more public appearance, she might have stood up in the world as *a burning and a shining light*, so far as her sex and station required. This furniture of the mind seems, indeed, to be lost in death, and buried in the grave: But we give in too much to the judgment of sense; did not this extensive knowledge lay a foundation for her early piety? And did it not, by this means, prepare her for a more speedy removal to a higher school of improvement, and a world of sublimer devotion? And does she not shine there among brighter and better company?

We mourn again for our loss of a person so valuable, when we think of that general calmness and sedateness of soul, which she possessed in a peculiar degree, so that she was not greatly elevated or depressed by common accidents or occurrences; but this secured her from the rise of unruly passions, those stormy powers of nature, which sometimes sink us into guilt and distress, and make us unwilling and afraid of the sudden summons of Christ, lest he should find us under these disorders.

We think of her firmness of spirit, and that steady resolution, which, joined with a natural reserve, was a happy guard against many of the forward follies and dangers of youth, and proved a successful defence against some of the allurements and temptations of the gayer years of life: And then we mourn afresh, that a person, so well formed for growing prudence and virtue, should be so suddenly snatched away from amongst us. But this steady and dispassionate frame of soul, well improved by religion and divine grace, became an effectual means to preserve her youth more unblemished, and made her spirit fitter for the heavenly world, where *nothing can enter that is defiled*, and whose delights are not tumultuous as ours are on earth; but all is a calm and rational state of joy.

We lament yet further, when we think of her native goodness, and unwillingness to displease: But goodness is the very temper of that region to which she is gone, and she is the fitter companion for the inhabitants of a world of love.

We lament, that such a pattern of early piety should be taken from the earth, when there are so few practisers of it, especially among the youth of our degenerate age, and in plentiful circumstances of life. But it is a matter of high thankfulness to God, who

endowed her with those valuable qualities, and trained her up so soon for a world so much better than ours is. Let our sorrow for the deceased be changed into devout praises to divine grace. Let us imitate the holy language of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, and say, "*We are comforted*, even at her grave, *in all our afflictions and distress*, by the remembrance of her faith and piety. *What sufficient thanks can we render unto God*, upon her account, *for all the joy, wherewith we rejoice*, for her sake, *before our God, night and day, praying exceedingly that we may see* her *face* in the state of perfection? *And may God himself, even our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way* to the happy world, where she dwells;" 1 *Thess.* iii. 7—12. The imitation of what was excellent in her life, and watchful readiness to follow her in death, are the best honours we can pay her memory, and the wisest improvement of the present providence. May the Spirit of grace teach us these lessons, and make us all learn them with power, that when our Lord Jesus shall come to call us hence by death, or shall appear, with all his saints, in the great rising day, we may be found among his wakeful servants, and partake of the promised blessedness! *Amen.*

DISCOURSE III.

SURPRISE IN DEATH.

MARK xiii. 35, 36.

WATCH YE, THEREFORE;—LEST, COMING SUDDENLY, HE FIND YOU SLEEPING.

AMONG the parables of our Saviour, there are several recorded by the evangelists, which represent him as a prince, or lord and master of a family, departing for a season from his servants, and in his absence appointing them their proper work, with a solemn charge, to wait for his return; at which time he foretold them, that he should require an account of their behaviour in his absence; and he either intimates or expresses a severe treatment of those who should neglect their duty while he was gone, or make no preparation for his appearance. He informs them also, that he should come upon them on a sudden, and, for this reason, charges them to be always awake, and upon their guard, verse 35. *Watch ye, therefore; for ye know not when the master of the house cometh,* whether *at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning.*

Though the ultimate design of these parables, and the coming of Christ mentioned therein, refer to the great day of judgment, when he shall return from heaven, shall raise the dead, and call mankind to appear before his judgment-seat, to receive a recompence, according to their works; yet both the duties and the warnings, which are represented in these parables, seem to be very accommodable to the hour of our death; for then our Lord Jesus, who has *the keys of death and the grave,* and the unseen world, comes to finish our state of trial, and to put a period to all our works on earth: He comes then to call us into the invisible state; he disposes our bodies to the dust, and our souls are sent into other mansions, and taste some degrees of appointed happiness or misery, according to their behaviour here. The solemn and awful warning which my text gives us concerning the return of Christ to judgment, may be pertinently applied to the season when he shall send his messenger of death to fetch us hence? *Watch ye, therefore—lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping.*

When I had occasion to treat on a subject near akin to this,* I shewed that there was a distinction to be made between the dead sleep of a sinner, and slumber of an unwatchful christian. Those who never had the work of religion begun in their hearts or lives, are sleeping the sleep of death; whereas some, who are made alive by the grace of Christ, yet may indulge sinful drowsiness, and grow careless and secure, slothful and inactive. "The wise virgins, as well as the foolish, were slumbering and sleeping;" *Matt.* xxv. 5. The mischiefs and sorrows which attend each of these when Christ shall summon them to judgment, or shall call them away from earth, by natural death, are great and formi-

* In a funeral sermon for Mrs. Sarah Abney, on Luke xii. 37. *Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching.* See page 127.

dable, though they are not equally dangerous: Let us consider each of them in succession, in order to rouse dead sinners from their lethargy, and to keep drowsy christians awake.

First, let us survey the sad consequences which attend those that are asleep in sin, and spiritually dead, when the hour of natural death approaches: They are such as these:

I. "If they happen to be awakened on the borders of the grave, into what a horrible confusion and distress of soul are they plunged?" What keen anguish of conscience for their past iniquities seizes upon them? What bitter remorse and self-reproaches for the seasons of grace which they have wasted, for the proposals of mercy which they have abused and rejected, and for the divine salvation which seems now to be lost for ever, and put almost beyond the reach of possibility and hope. They feel the messenger of death laying his cold hands upon them, and they shudder and tremble with the expectation of approaching misery. They look up to heaven, and they see a God of holiness there, as *a consuming fire*, ready to devour them as stubble fit for the flame: They look to the Son of God, *who has the keys of death* in his hand, and who calls them away from the land of the living, even to Jesus, the compassionate Mediator, but they can scarce persuade themselves to expect any thing from him, because they have turned a deaf ear so long to the invitations of his gospel, and so long affronted his divine compassion. They look behind them, and with painful agonies are frighted at the mountains of their former guilt ready to overwhelm them: They look forward and see the pit of hell opening upon them with all its torments; long darkness without a glimpse of light, and eternal despair with no glimmerings of hope.

Or if now and then amidst their horrors, they would try to form some faint hope of mercy, how are their spirits perplexed with prevailing and distracting fears, with keen and cutting reflections? "Oh that I had improved my former seasons for reading, for praying, for meditating on divine things! But I cannot read, I can hardly meditate, and scarce know how to pray. Will the ear of God ever hearken to the cries and groans of a rebel that has so long resisted his grace? Are there any pardons to be had for a criminal who never left his sins till vengeance was in view? Will the blood of Christ be ever applied to wash a soul that has wallowed in his defilements till death roused him out of them? Will the meanest favour of heaven be indulged to a wretch who has grown bold in sin, in opposition to so loud and repeated warnings? I am awake, indeed, but I can see nothing round me but distresses and discouragements, and my soul sinks within me, and my heart dies at the thoughts of appearing before God."

It is a wise and just observation among christians, though it is a very common one, that the scriptures gives us one instance of a penitent saved in his dying hour, and that is, "the thief upon the cross," *Luke* xxiii. 43. that so none might utterly despair; but there is but one such instance given, that none might presume. The work of repentance is too difficult and too important a thing to be left to the languors of a dying bed, and the tumults and flutterings of thought which attend such a late conviction. There can be hardly any effectual proofs given of the sincerity of such repentings: And I am verily persuaded there are few of them sincere; for we have often found these violent emotions of conscience vanish again, if the sinner has happened to recover his health: They seem to be merely the wild perplexities and struggles of nature averse to misery, rather than averse to sin: Their renouncing their former lusts on the very borders of hell and destruction, is more like the vehement and irregular efforts of a drowning creature, con-

strained to let go a most beloved object, and taking eager hold of any plank for safety, rather than the calm, and reasonable, and voluntary designs of a mariner, who forsakes his earthly joys, ventures himself in a ship that is offered him, and sets sail for the heavenly country. I never will pronounce such efforts and endeavours desperate, lest I limit the grace of God, which is unbounded; but I can give very little encouragement for hope to an hour or two of this vehement and tumultuous penitence on the very brink of damnation. Judas repented, but his agonies of soul hurried him to hasten his own death, *that he might go to his own place:* And there is abundance of such kind of repenting in every corner of hell; that is a deep and dreadful pit, whence there is no redemption, though there are millions of such sort of penitents; it is a strong and dark prison, where no beam of comfort ever shines, where bitter anguish and mourning for sins past is no evangelical repentance, but everlasting and hopeless sorrow.

II. "Those that are found sleeping at the hour of death, are carried away at once from all their sensual pursuits and enjoyments, which were their chosen portion, and their highest happiness." At once they lose all their golden dreams, and their chief good is, as it were, snatched away from them at once, and for ever. "They stand on slippery places, they are brought to destruction in a moment, and all their former joys *are like a dream, when one awaketh,* and finds himself beset round with terrors;" *Psalm* lxxiii. 18—20.

Are there any of you that are pleasing yourselves here in the days of youth and vanity, and indulge your dreams of pleasure in the sleep of spiritual death, think of the approaching moment, when the death of nature shall dissolve your sleep, and scatter all the delusive images of sinful joy. This separation from the body of flesh, is a fearful shock given to the soul, that makes it awake indeed. Sermons would not do it; the voice of the preacher was not loud enough; strokes of affliction and smarting providences would not do it; perhaps the soul might be roused a little, but dropped into profound sleep again: Sudden or surprising deaths near them, and even the pains of nature in their own flesh, their own sicknesses and diseases, did not awaken them, nor the voice of the Lord in them all: But the parting stroke, that divides the soul and body, will terribly awaken the soul from the vain delusion, and all its fancied delights for ever vanish.

When they are *visited by the Lord of hosts with this thunder and earthquake,* as the prophet Isaiah speaks, *Isaiah* xxix. 8. when this storm and tempest of death shall shake the sinner out of his airy visions, *he shall be as a hungry man that dreameth he was eating, but awakes, and his soul is empty; or as a thirsty* creature *dreaming that he drinks, but he awaketh, and behold he is faint,* and his soul is pained with raging appetite: The sinner finds, to his own torment, how wretchedly he has deceived himself, and fed upon vanity! There are no more earthly objects to please his senses, and to gratify his inclinations; but the soul for ever lies upon a rack of carnal desire, and no proper object to satisfy it. His taste is not suited to the pleasures of a world of spirits; he can find no God there to comfort him: God, with his offers of grace, are gone for ever, and the world with its joys are for ever vanished, while the wretched and malicious creatures, into whose company he is hurried, and who were the tempters or associates of his crimes, shall stand round him to become his tormentors.

III. "Though death will awaken sinful souls into a sharper and more lively sense of divine and heavenly things than ever they had in this world, yet they shall never be awakened to spiritual life and holiness:" And I think I may add, that though they should

be awakened to a sight of God, and his justice, and his grace, to a sight of heaven and hell, more immediate and perspicuous than what even the saints themselves usually enjoy in this life, yet they would remain still under the bondage of their lusts, still *dead in trespasses and sins.* They shall for ever continue unbeloved of God, and incapable of all the happiness of the heavenly state, because they are for ever averse to the holiness of God, and themselves for ever unholy. It is only in the present state of trial, and under the present proposals of grace, that sleeping sinners can be awakened into the spiritual and divine life. *The voice of the Son of God,* that breaks the monuments of brass, and makes tombs of hardest marble yield to his call, shall never break one heart of stone, which is gone down to death in its native and sinful hardiness: That almighty voice, that must awaken the nations of the dead, and command their bodies up from the grave, shall never awaken one dead soul when they are past the limits of this life. The compassionate calls of a Saviour, and the offers of mercy, are then come to their utmost period: And if we refuse to hear the call of mercy to the moment of death, we shall then be terribly constrained to feel the loss of it, but never able to obtain the blessing.

Obstinate sleepers shall be awakened to see God, but only as Balaam was: *I shall see him, but not nigh;* Numbers xxiv. 17. The saints in this life have God near them in all their trials, as a Father and a friend to uphold, to comfort, to sanctify, though they *see him but darkly through a glass,* and behold but little of his power or glory: The sinner, awaking in hell, shall perhaps have a clearer and more acute perception of what God is, than any saint on earth: But he shall behold him as an enemy, and not a friend. If he beholds him in the glory of his grace, it is at a dreadful and insupportable distance; there is no grace for him: He sees him in his holiness, but he cannot love him; he has no meltings of true penitence for his former rebellions against God, his heart is hardened into everlasting enmity, and shall never taste of his love. Hence arise all the foul and gnawing passions of envy, malignity, and long despair, which are the very image of Satan, and change mankind into devils. These impenitent sons and daughters of men shall grow into the more complete likeness of those wicked spirits, and under the impressions of their guilt and damnation, they shall rival those apostate and cursed creatures in the obstinate hatred of God, and all that is holy.

IV. Hence it will follow, in the last place, that the sinner, who is "fast asleep in his sins, at the hour of death, shall awake into such a life as is worse than dying." He shall be surprised all at once into darkness and fire, which have no gleam of light, and sorrows without mitigation, and which can find no end. The punishment of hell is not called eternal death, to denote a state of senseless and stupid existence; but death being the most opposite to life, and all the enjoyments of it, the misery of hell is described by death as the most formidable thing to nature, as a word that puts a period to all the enjoyments of this mortal life, and stands directly opposite to a life of joy and glory in the immortal world. Happy would it be for such souls, if they could sink into an everlasting sleep, and grow stupid and senseless for ever and ever; but this is a favour not to be granted to those who have been constant and unrepenting rebels against the law and the grace of God.

The moment when the body falls asleep in death, the soul is more awake than ever to behold its own guilt and wretchedness. It has then such a lively and piercing sense of its own iniquities, and the divine wrath that is due to them, as it never saw or felt before. The inward senses of the soul, if I may so express it, which have been darkened and

stupified, and benumbed in this body, are all awake at once when the veil of flesh is thrown off, and the curtains are drawn back, which divided them from the world of spirits. Every thought of sin, and the anger of God, wounds the spirit deep in this awakened state, though it scarce felt any thing of it before; and *a wounded spirit who can bear?* Prov. xviii. 14. But sinners must bear it days without end, and ages without hope.

Then the crimes they have committed, and the sinful pleasures they have indulged, shall glare upon their remembrance, and stare them in the face with dreadful surprise; and each of them is enough to drive a soul to despair: Nor can they turn their eyes away from the horrid sight, for their criminal practices beset them around, and the naked soul is all sight and all sense; it is eye and ear all over; it hears the dreadful curses of the law, and the sentence of the Judge, and never, never forgets it. This is the character, these the circumstances of an obstinate sinner, that awakes not till the moment of death, and *lifts up his eyes in hell*, as our Saviour expresses it, *Luke* xvi. 23. These will be the consequences of our guilt and folly, if we are found in a dead sleep of sin when our Lord comes to call us from this mortal state.

Secondly. Let us spend a few thoughts also upon the dangerous and unhappy circumstances of those, of whom we may "have some reason to hope they have once begun religion in good earnest, and are made spiritually alive, but have indulged themselves in drowsiness, and worn out the latter end of their days in a careless, secure, and slothful frame of spirit."

1. If they have had the principle of vital religion wrought in their hearts, yet, "by these criminal slumbers, they darken or lose their evidences of grace, and, by this means, they cut themselves off from the sweet reflections and comforts of it on a dying bed, when they have most need of them." They know not whether they are the children of God or no, and are in anxious confusion and distressing fear: They have scarce any plain proofs of their conversion to God, and the evidences of true christianity ready at hand, when all are little enough to support their spirits: They have not used themselves to search for them by self-enquiry, and to keep them in their sight, and therefore they are missing in this important hour. They have not been wont to live upon their heavenly hopes, and they cannot be found when they want them to rest upon in death. They die, therefore, almost like sinners, though they may perhaps have been once converted to holiness, and there may be a root of grace remaining in them; and the reason is, because they have lived too much as sinners do. They have given too great and criminal an indulgence to the vain and worldly cares, or the trifling amusements of this life; these have engrossed almost all their thoughts and their time, and therefore, in the day of death, they fall under terrors and painful apprehensions of a doubtful eternity just at hand.

If we have not walked closely with God in this world, we may well be afraid to appear before him in the next. If we have not maintained a constant converse with Jesus our Saviour by holy exercises of faith and hope, it is no wonder if we are not so ready with cheerfulness and joy to resign our departing spirits into his hand. It is possible we may have a right to the inheritance of heaven, having had some sight of it by faith, as revealed in the gospel, having in the main chosen it for our portion, and set our feet in the path of holiness that leads to it; but we have so often wandered out of the way, that in this awful and solemn hour we shall be in doubt whether we shall be received *at the gates, and enter into the city.*

Such unwatchful christians have not kept the eternal glories of heaven in their constant and active pursuit; they have not lived upon them as their portion and inheritance; they have been too much strangers to the invisible world of happiness, and they know not how to venture through death into it. They have built indeed upon the solid foundation, Christ Jesus and the gospel; but they have mingled so much *hay and stubble* with the superstructure, that when they depart hence, or when they appear before Christ in judgment, *they shall suffer great loss*, by the burning of their works, *yet themselves may be saved, so as by fire;* 1 Cor. iii. 10—15. They may pass, as it were, by the flame of hell, and have something like the scorching terrors of it in death, though the abounding and forgiving grace of the gospel may convey them safe to heaven: They escape as a man that is awakened with the sudden alarms of fire, who suffers the loss of his substance, and a great part of the fruit of his labours, and just saves his own life. They plunge into eternity, and make a sort of terrible escape from hell.

2. "They can never expect any peculiar favours from heaven at the hour of death, no special visitations of the comforting Spirit, nor that the love of God, and the joy of his presence, should attend them *through the dark valley*." It is not to such unwatchful or sleepy christians that God is wont to vouchsafe his choicest consolations. They fall under terrible fears about the pardon of their sins, when they stand in most need of the sight of their pardon; and Christ, as the ruler of his church, sees it fit they should be thus punished for their negligence. They lay hold of the promises of mercy with a trembling hand, and cannot claim them by a vigorous faith, because they have not been wont to live upon them, nor do they see those holy characters in their own hearts and lives, which confirm their title to them. They have no bright views of the celestial world, and earnests of their salvation, for it is only for watchful souls that these cordials are prepared in the fainting hour: It is only to the watchful christian that these foretastes of glory are given. *The fruit of righteousness is peace, and the effect of righteousness is quietness and assurance for ever;* Isaiah xxxii. 17. *Blessed is he which watcheth, and keepeth his garments* clean, *that he may enter* with triumph *into that city, where nothing shall enter that defileth;* Rev. xvi. 15.

3. "Slumbering and slothful christians are oftentimes left to wrestle with sore temptations of Satan, and have dreadful conflicts in the day of death:" And the reason is evident, because they have not watched against their adversary, and obtained but few victories over him in their life. These temptations are keen and piercing thorns, that enter deep into the heart of a dying creature. The devil may *be let loose upon them* with great wrath, *knowing that his time is but short;* Rev. xii. 12. and yet there is great justice in the conduct of the God of heaven, in giving them up to be buffeted by the powers of hell. What frightful agonies are raised in the conscience by the tempter and the accuser of souls, on a sick or dying bed, can hardly be described by the living, and are known only to those who have felt them in death.

4. "Such drowsy christians make dismal work for new and terrible repentance on a death bed;" for though they have sincerely repented in times past of their former sins, yet having too much omitted the self-mortifying duties, having given too much indulgence to temptation and folly, and having not maintained this habitual penitence for their daily offences in constant exercise, their spirits are now filled with fresh convictions, and bitter remorse of heart. The guilt of their careless and slothful conduct finds them out now, and besets them around, and they feel most acute sorrows, and wounding reflections of

conscience, while they have need of most comfort. What a glorious entrance had St. Paul into the world of spirits, and the presence of Christ? He had made repentance, and mortification, and faith in Jesus, his daily work: *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* Rom. vii. 24. I run, I fight, *I subdue my body, and keep it under;* 1 Cor. ix. 26, 27. *I am crucified to the world, and the world to me; the life which I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God;* Gal. ii. 20. vi. 14. When he was *ready to be offered up, and the time of his departure was at hand,* from the edge of the sword, and the borders of the grave, he could look back upon his former life, and say, *I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me;* 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

5. "The unwatchful christian, at the hour of death, has the pain and anguish of reflecting, that he has omitted many duties to God and man, and these can never be performed now;" that he has done scarce any services for Christ in the world, and those must be left for ever undone: *There is no farther work or device,* no labours of zeal, no activity for God *in the grave, whither we are hasteuing;* Eccles. ix. 10. "Alas! I have brought forth but little fruit to God, and it is well if I be not cast away as an *unprofitable servant.* My talents have lain bound up in rust, or been but poorly employed, whilst I have lain slumbering and inactive: The records of my life, in the court of heaven, will shew but very little service for God amongst men: I have raised few monuments of praise to my Redeemer, and I can never raise them now. I shall have but few testimonies for my love and zeal to appear in the great day of account, when the martyrs, and the confessors, and the lively christians, shall be surrounded with the living ensigns of their victories over sin and the world, and their glorious services for their Redeemer. Wretch that I am! that I have loved my Lord at so cold a rate, and lain slumbering on a bed of ease, whilst I should have been fighting the battles of the Lord, and gaining daily honours for my Saviour!"

6. "As such sort of christians give but little glory to God in life, so they do him no honour in death; they are no ornaments to religion while they continue here, and leave perhaps but little comfort with their friends when they go hence." Doubtings and jealousies about their eternal welfare mingle with our tears and sorrows for a dying friend; these anxious fears about the departed spirit swell the tide of our grief high, and double the inward anguish. They are gone, alas! from our world, but we know not whither they are gone, to heaven or to hell. A sad farewel to those whom we love! A dismal parting stroke, and a long heart-ach!

And what honour can be expected to be done to God or his Son, what reputation or glory can be given to religion and the gospel, by a drowsy christian, departing, as it were, under a spiritual lethargy? He dies under a cloud, and casts a gloom upon the christian faith. St. Paul was a man of another spirit, a lively and active saint, full of vigour and zeal in his soul: It was the holy resolution and assurance of this blessed apostle, *that Christ should be magnified in his body, whether by life or death;* Phil. i. 20. He spent his life in the service of Christ, and he could rejoice in death as his gain. It is a glory to the gospel when we can lie down and die with courage, in the hope of its promised blessings. It is an honour to our common faith, when it overcomes the terrors of death, and raises the christian to a song of triumph, in view of the last enemy. It is as

a new crown put upon the head of our Redeemer, and a living cordial put into the hands of mourning friends in our dying hour, when we can take our leave of them with holy fortitude, rejoicing in the salvation of Christ. No sooner does he call, but we are ready, and can answer with holy transport, " Lord, I come." This is a blessing that belongs only to the watchful christian. May every one of us be awake to salvation in our expiring moments, and partake of this glorious blessedness!

Here this Discourse may be divided.

I proceed now to a few remarks, and particularly such as relate to the necessity and duty of constant watchfulness, and the hazardous case of sleeping souls.

Remark I. " To presume on long life is a most dangerous temptation, for it is the common spring and cause of spiritual sleep and drowsiness. Could we take an inward view of the hearts of men, and trace out the springs of their coldness and indifference about eternal things, and the shameful neglect of their most important interests, we should find this secret thought in the bottom of their hearts, " that we are not like to die to-day or to-morrow." *They put this evil day afar off*, and indulge themselves in their carnal delights, without due solicitude to prepare for the call of God. There is scarce any thing produces so much evil fruit in the world, so much shameful wickedness amongst the sensual and the profane, or such neglect of lively religion among real christians, as this *bitter root* of presumption upon life and time before us. *Matt.* xxiv. 48, 49. " The evil servant did not begin to smite his fellows, and to eat and drink with the drunken, till he hath said in his heart, *my Lord delayeth his coming:* It was *while the bridegroom tarried*, and they imagined he would tarry longer, that even the wise virgins fell into slumbers; *Matt.* xxv. 5. Ask your own hearts, my friends, does not this thought secretly lurk within you, when you comply with a temptation, " Surely I shall not die yet, I have no sickness upon me, nor tokens of death, I shall live a little longer, and repent of my follies?" Vain expectation, and groundless fancy! when you see the young, and the strong, and the healthy seized away from the midst of you, and a final period put at once to all their works and designs in this life. Yet we are foolish enough to imagine our term of life shall be extended, and we presume upon months and years which God hath not written down for us in his own book, and which he will never give us to enjoy.

We are all borderers upon the river of death, which conveys us into the eternal world, and we should be ever waiting the call of our Lord, that we may launch away with joy to the regions of immortality: But thoughtless creatures that we are, we are perpetually wandering far up into the fields of sense and time, we are gathering the gay and fading flowers that grow there, and filling our laps with them as a fair treasure, or making garlands for ambition to crown our brows, till one and another of us is called off on a sudden, and hurried away from this mortal coast: Those of us who survive are surprised a little, we stand gazing, we follow our departing friends with a weeping eye for a minute or two, and then we fall to our amusements again, and grow busy, as before, in gathering the flowers of time and sense. Oh how fond we are to enrich ourselves with these perishing trifles, and adorn our heads with honours and withering vanities, never thinking which of us may receive the next summons to leave all behind us, and stand before God! but each presumes " it will not be sent to me." We trifle with God, and things eternal, or utterly forget them, while our hands and our hearts are thus deeply engaged in the pursuit of our earthly delights: All our powers of thought and action are intensely busied amongst

the dreams of this life, while we are asleep to God, because we vainly imagine he will not call us yet.

II. "Whatsoever puts us in mind of dying, should be improved to awaken us from our spiritual sleep." Sudden deaths near us should have this effect; our young companions and acquaintance, snatched away from among us, in an unexpected hour, should become our monitors in death, and teach us this divine and needful lesson? The surprising loss of our friends, who lay near our hearts, should put us in mind of our own departure, and powerfully awaken us from our dangerous slumbers. Sinners, when they feel no sorrows, they think of no death; but *when the judgments of God are in the earth, his Spirit can awaken the inhabitants of the world to learn righteousness;* Isaiah xxvi. 9. At such seasons it is time for *the sinners in Zion to be afraid, and fearfulness to surprise the hypocrites;* Isaiah xxxiii. 14. Even the children of God have sometimes need of painful warning-pieces to awaken them from their careless, their slothful, and their secure frame. And as for those souls, who are indeed *awake to righteousness*, and lively in the practice of all religion and virtue, such sudden and awful strokes of providence have a happy tendency to wean them from creatures, and keep them awake to God, that, when their Lord comes, he may find them watching, and pronounce upon them everlasting blessedness.

III. "No person can be exempted from this duty of watchfulness, till he is lord of his own life, and can appoint the time of his own dying." Then indeed you might have some colour for your carnal indulgences, some pretence for sleeping, if you were sovereign of death and the grave, and had the keys in your own hand.

And truly such as venture to sleep in sin, do in effect say, "We are lords of our own life:" They act and manage as if their times were in their own hands, and not in the hand of their Maker: But the watchful christian lives upon that principle which David professes, Psalm xxxi. 15. *My times are in thy hand, O Lord;* and they never give rest to themselves, till they can rejoice with him, and say to the Lord, *thou art my God, into thy hands I commit my spirit, for thou hast redeemed it*, and I leave it to thy appointment when thou wilt dislodge me from this body of flesh and blood, and call me into thy more immediate presence. Verse 5. If we could but resist the messenger of death when the Lord of hosts has sent it, if we could shut the mouth of the grave, when the Son of God has opened it for us with the key that is entrusted in his hand, we might say then to our souls, "sleep on your bed of ease, and take your rest." But wo be to those who will venture to sleep in an unholy and unpardoned state, or even allow themselves the indulgence of short and sinful slumbers, when they cannot resist death one moment, when they cannot delay the summons of heaven, when they cannot defer their appearance before that Judge, whose sentence is eternal pleasure or everlasting pain. Our holy watch must not be intermitted one moment, for every following moment is a grand uncertainty. There is no minute of life, no point of time, wherein I can say, "I shall not die;" and therefore I should not dare to say, "This minute I will take a short slumber." What if my Lord should summon me whilst he finds me sleeping? His command cannot be disobeyed, the very call and sound of it divides me from flesh and blood, and all that is mortal, and sends me at once into the eternal world, for it is an almighty voice.

IV. As it is a foolish and dangerous thing for any of the sons and daughters of men to presume upon long life, and neglect their watch, so "persons under some peculiar circumstances are emimently called to be ever wakeful." Give me leave here to reckon up some of them, and make a particular address to the persons concerned.

1. Is your constitution of body weak and feeble? You carry then a perpetual warning about you never to indulge sinful drowsiness. Every languor of nature assures you that it is sinking to the dust; every pain you feel should put you in mind that the pains of death are ready to seize you: You are tottering upon the very borders of the grave, and will you venture to drop in before your hopes of life and immortality are secured, and a joyful resurrection? You pass perhaps many nights, wherein the infirmities of your flesh will not suffer you to sleep, and to take that common refreshment of nature; and shall not these same infirmities keep you awake to things spiritual, and rouse all your thoughts and cares about your immortal interests?

You, whose circumstances or employments of life expose you to perpetual dangers, either by land or by sea; you, who *carry your lives*, as it were, *in your hand*, and are often in a day within a few inches of death; is it not necessary for you to enquire daily, Am I prepared for a departure hence? Am I ready to hear the summons of my Lord, and ready to give up my account before him? Shall I dare go on another day with my sins unpardoned, with my soul unsanctified, and in immediate danger of eternal misery? A fall from a horse or a house-top may send you down to the pit, whence there is no redemption; every wind that blows, and every rising wave, may convey you into the eternal world, and are you ready to meet the great God in such a surprise, and without warning?

3. You who are young and vigorous, and flourish amidst all the gaieties and allurements of life, you are in most danger of being lulled asleep in sin, and therefore I addressed you lately in a funeral discourse, when the present providence gave each of you a new and loud call to awake, and I pray God you may hear his voice in it.

4. Perhaps others of you are arrived at old age, and the course of nature forbids you to expect a long continuance in the land of the living: Are any of my hearers ancient sinners, and asleep still? Venturous and thoughtless creatures! that have grown old in slumber, and worn out their whole life in iniquity! Surely it is time for you to hear the voice of the Son of God in the gospel, and accept of his salvation: *Behold, the judge is at the door!* he comes speedily, and he will not tarry; his herald of death is just at hand: Are you willing he should seize you in a deadly sleep, and send you into eternal sorrows? And let aged christians bestir themselves, and awake from their slothful and secure frames of spirit; let them look upward to the crown that is not far off, to the prize that is almost within reach: *Whatsoever your hand* or heart *find to do* for God, *do it with all your* zeal and *might;* Eccles. ix. 10. *Let your loins be girded about*, and your natural powers active in his service, *let your lamp* of profession be bright and *burning*, that when Jesus comes, ye may receive him with joy, *Luke* xii. 35, 36.

5. And are there any of you that are under decays of grace and piety, that are labouring and wrestling with strong corruptions, or in actual conflict with repeated temptations, which too often prevail over you? it becomes you to hear the watch-word, which Christ often gives to his churches under such circumstances: Make haste and awake unto holiness, *be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain that are ready to die; hold fast what thou hast received;* Rev. iii. 2, 11. remember thy first affection and zeal, and repent and mourn for what thou hast lost, lest I come upon thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know the hour: *Remember whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works, for thou hast lost thy first love;* Rev. ii. 3, 4. Have a care of dangerous lukewarmness and indifference in the things of religion. This is the very temper of a sleepy declining christian, while he dreams he is rich and has great attainments. Take heed lest, pre-

suming upon thy riches, and thy self-sufficiency, thou shouldst be found *wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked;* Rev. iii. 16. Keep your souls awake hourly, and be upon your guard against every adversary, and every defilement, lest ye be seized away in the commission of some sin, or in the compliance with some foul temptation. The drowsy soldier is liable to be led captive, and to die in fetters, and groan heavily in death. But blessed is the watchful christian; he shall be found amongst the overcomers, and shall partake of the rich variety of divine favours which are contained in the epistles to the seven churches, *Rev.* chapters ii. and iii. Though the greatest part of a former discourse has been describing the blessedness of a watchful christian at the hour of death, and in this I have set before you the sad consequences that attend sleepers, both which are powerful preservatives against drowsiness, yet, at the conclusion of this sermon, give me leave to add a few more motives to the duty of watchfulness, for we cannot be too well guarded against the danger of spiritual sloth and security.

Motive I. "Our natures at best, in the present state, are too much inclined to slumber." We are too ready to fall asleep hourly: All the saints on earth, even the most lively and active of them, are not out of danger, while they carry this flesh and blood about them. Indeed the best of christians here below dwell but, as it were, in twilight, and, in some sense, they may be described as persons between sleeping and waking, in comparison of the world of spirits. We behold divine things here but darkly, and exert our spiritual faculties but in a feeble manner: It is only in the other world that we are broad awake, and in the perfect and unrestrained exercise of our vital powers; there only the complete life and vigour of a saint appears. In such a drowsy state then, and in this dusky hour, we cannot be too diligent in rousing ourselves, lest we sink down into dangerous slumbers. Besides, if we profess to be *children of the light, and of the day,* and growing up to a brighter immortality, *let us not sleep, as do others,* who are the sons and daughters of night and darkness; 1 *Thess.* v. 4, 5.

II. "Almost every thing around us, in this world of sense and sin, tends to lull us asleep again as soon as we begin to be awake." The busy or the pleasant scenes of this temporal life, are ever calling away our thoughts from eternal things, they conceal from us the spiritual world, and close our eyes to God, and things divine and heavenly. If the eye of the soul were but open to invisible things, what lively christians would we be? But either the winds of worldly cares rock us to sleep, or the charm of worldly pleasures sooths us into deceitful slumbers. We are too ready to indulge earthly delights, and while we dream of pleasure in the creatures, we lose, or at least abate, our delights in God. Even the lawful satisfactions of flesh and sense, and the enticing objects round about us, may attach our hearts so fast to them, as to draw us down into a bed of carnal ease, till we fall asleep in spiritual security, and forget that we are made for heaven, and that our hope and our home is on high.

III. "Many thousands have been found sleeping at the call of Christ:" Some perhaps in a profound and deadly sleep, and others in an hour of dangerous slumber: Many an acquaintance of ours has gone down to the grave, when neither they nor we thought of their dying at such a season. But as thoughtless as they were, they were never the farther from the point of death, and we shudder with horror when we think what is become of their souls. While we are young, we are ready to please ourselves with the enjoyments of life, and flatter our hopes with a long succession of them. We suppose death to be at the distance of fifty or threescore miles; threescore years and ten is the appointed

period: But, alas! how few are there whose hopes are fulfilled, or whose life is extended to those dimensions? Perhaps the messenger of death is within a furlong of our dwelling; a few more steps onward, and he smites us down to the dust. There are some beautiful verses, which I have read perhaps thirty years ago, wherein the ingenious author describes the different stages of human life, under the image of a fair prospect, or landscape, and death is placed by mistaken mortals afar off beyond them all. Since the lines return now upon my remembrance, I will repeat them here with some small alterations. They are as follow:

"Life, and the scenes that round it rise,
Share in the same uncertainties.
Yet still we hug ourselves with vain presage,
Of future days, serene and long,
Of pleasures fresh, and ever strong,
An active youth, and slow declining age.

"Like a fair prospect still we make
Things future pleasing forms to take:
First, verdant meads arise, and flow'ry fields;
Cool groves, and shady copses here,
There brooks, and winding streams appear,
While change of objects still new pleasures yields.

"Farther fine castles court the eye,
There wealth and honours we espy;
Beyond, a huddled mixture fills the stage,
Till the remoter distance shrouds
The plains with hills, those hills with clouds,
There we place death behind old shiv'ring age.

"When death, alas! perhaps too nigh,
In the next hedge doth skulking lie,
There plants his engines, thence lets fly his dart;
Which, while we ramble without fear,
Will stop us in our full career,
And force us from our airy dreams to part."

How fond and vain are our imaginations, when we have seen others called away, on a sudden, from the early scenes of life, to promise ourselves a long continuance here! We have the same feeble bodies, the same tabernacles of clay, that others have, and we are liable to many of the same accidents or casualties: The same killing diseases are at work in our natures, and why should we imagine or presume that others should go so much before us.

And if we enquire of ourselves as to character, or merit, or moral circumstances of any kind, and compare ourselves with those that are gone before, what foundation have we to promise ourselves a longer continuance here? Have we not the same sins, or greater, to provoke God? Are we more useful in the world than they, and do more service for his name? May not God summon us off the stage of life on a sudden, as well as others? What are we better than they? Are we not as much under the sovereign disposal of the great God as any of our acquaintance, who have been seized in the flower and prime of life, and called away in an unexpected hour? And what power have we to resist the seizure, or what promise to hope that God will delay longer? Let us then no more deceive ourselves with vain imaginations, but each of us awake, and bestir ourselves, as though we were the next persons to be called away from this assembly, and to appear next before the Lord.

IV. " When we are awake, we are not only fitter for the coming of our Lord, to call us away by death, and fitter for his appearance to the great judgment, but we are better prepared also to attend him in every call to present duty, and more ready to meet his appearance in every providence." It is the christian soldier, who is ever awake and on his guard, that is only fit for every sudden appointment to new stations and services; he is more prepared for any post of danger and hazardous enterprize, and better furnished to sustain the roughest assaults. We shall be less shocked at sudden afflictions here on earth, if our souls keep heaven in view, and are ready winged for immortality. When we are fit to die, we are fit to live also, and to do better service for God, in whichsoever of his worlds he shall please to appoint our station. " My business, O Father, and my joy is to do thy will among the sons of mortality, or among the spirits of the blessed on high."

V. " Let us remember we have slept too long already in days past, and it is but a little while that we are called to watch." We have worn away too much of our life in sloth and drowsiness. *The night is far spent* with many of us, *the day is at hand; it is now high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we* first *believed;* Rom. xiii. 11, 22. Another hour or two, and the night will be at an end with us; Jesus, the morning star, is just appearing: *What? can we not watch one hour?* Matt. xxvi. 40. O happy souls, that keep themselves awake to God in the midst of this dreaming world! Happy indeed when our Lord shall call us out of these dusky regions, and we shall answer his call with holy joy, and spring upward to the inheritance of the saints in light! Then all the seasons of darkness and slumbering will be finished for ever; there is no need of laborious watchfulness in that world, where there is no flesh and blood to hang heavy upon the spirit; but the sanctified powers of the soul are all life and immortal vigour. There is no want of the sunbeams to make their daylight, or to irradiate that city; *the glory of God enlightens it* with divine splendors, *and the Lamb is the light thereof;* Rev. xxi. 23. No inhabitant can sleep under such a united blaze of grace and glory: No faintings of nature, no languors or weariness are found in all that vital climate; every citizen is for ever awake, and busy under the beams of that glorious day; zeal, and love, and joy, are the springs of their eternal activity, and *there is no night there;* Rev. xxii. 5.

DISCOURSE IV.

CHRIST ADMIRED AND GLORIFIED IN HIS SAINTS.

2 THESS. i. 10.

WHEN HE SHALL COME TO BE GLORIFIED IN HIS SAINTS, AND TO BE ADMIRED IN ALL THEM THAT BELIEVE.

HOW mean and contemptible soever our Lord Jesus Christ might appear heretofore on earth, yet there is a day coming, when he shall make a glorious figure in the sight of men and angels. How little soever the saints may be esteemed in our day, and look poor and despicable in an ungodly world, yet there is an hour approaching when they shall be glorious beyond all imagination, and Christ himself shall be glorified in them. In that day shall the Lord our Saviour be the object of adoration and wonder, not only among those of the sons of men, that have believed on him, but before all the intellectual creation, and that, upon the account of his grace, manifested in believers. The natural enquiry that arises here, is this, "What particular instances of the grace of Christ, in his saints, shall be the matter of our admiration and his glory in that day?" To this I shall propose an answer under the following particulars.

First, It is a matter of pleasing wonder, "that persons of all characters should have been united in one faith, and persuaded to trust in the same Saviour, and embrace the same salvation;" for some, of all sorts, shall stand in that blessed assembly. Then it shall be a fruitful spring of wonder and glory, that men, of various nations and ages, of different tempers, capacities, and interests, of contrary educations and contrary prejudices, should believe one gospel, and trust in one deliverer from hell and death: That the sprightly, the studious and the stupid, the wise and the foolish, should relish and rejoice in the same sublime truths, not only concerning the true God, but also concerning Jesus the Redeemer; that the barbarian and the Roman, the Greek and the Jew, should approve and receive the same doctrines of salvation, that they should come into the same sentiments, in the matters of religion, and live upon them as their only hope.

Astonishing spectacle! when the dark and savage inhabitants of Africa, and our forefathers, the rugged and warlike Britons, from the ends of the earth, shall appear in that assembly, with some of the polite nations of Greece and Rome, and each of them shall glory in having been taught to renounce the gods of their ancestors, and the demons, which they once worshipped, and shall rejoice in Jesus the king of Israel, and in Jehovah the everlasting God. The conversion of the gentile world to christianity is a matter of glorious wonder, and shall appear to be so in that great day: That those, who had been educated to believe many gods, or no God at all, should renounce atheism and idolatry, and adore the true God only: and those who were taught to sacrifice to idols, and to atone for their own sins with the blood of beasts, should trust in one sacrifice, and the atoning blood of the Son of God. Here shall stand a believing atheist, and there a converted idolater, as

monuments of the almighty power of his grace. There shall shine also in that assembly, here and there a prince and a philosopher, though *not many wise, not many noble, not many mighty are called;* 1 Cor. i. 26. and they shall be matter of wonder and glory: That princes who love no controul, should bow their sceptres and their souls to the royalty and godhead of the poor man of Nazareth: That the heathen philosophers, who had been used only to yield to reason, should submit their understandings to divine revelation, even when it has something above the powers and discoveries of reason in it.

It shall raise our holy wonder too, when we shall behold some of the jewish priests and pharisees, who became converts to the christian faith, adorning the triumph of that day. The jewish pharisees, who expected a glorious temporal prince for their Messiah, that they should at last own the son of a carpenter for their Teacher, their Saviour, and their King; that they should veil the pride of their souls, and acknowledge a parcel of poor fishermen for his chief ministers of state, and receive them as ambassadors to the world. That those who thought they were righteous, and boasted in it, should renounce their boastings and their righteousnesses, and learn to expect salvation and life for themselves from the death and righteousness of another: That they who once called the cross of Christ folly and weakness, should come to see *the wisdom and power of God* in a crucified man, and believe him who hung upon a tree as an accursed creature, to be Emanuel, God with us, *God manifest in the flesh*, and the Saviour of mankind; *Matt.* i. 23. 1 *Tim.* iii. 16. Surely, shall men and angels say in that day, "These were the effects of an almighty power, it was the work of God the Saviour, *and it is marvellous in our eyes.* With united voices shall all the saints confess, *Flesh and blood has not revealed this unto us, but the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ;* and of God the Father. We had perished in our folly, but Christ *has been made wisdom to us;* we were in darkness, and lay under the shadow of death, but Christ has given us light; 1 *Cor.* i. 30. *Eph.* v. 14.

Come, all ye saints of these latter ages, *upon whom the end of the world is come*, raise your heads with me, and look far backwards, even to the beginning of time, and the days of Adam; for the believers of all ages, as well as of all nations, shall appear together in that day, and acknowledge Jesus the Saviour: According to the brighter or darker discoveries of the age in which they lived, he has been the common object of their faith. Ever since he was called the *seed of the woman*, Gen. iii. 15. till the time of his appearance in the flesh, all the chosen of God have lived upon his grace, though multitudes of them never knew his name. It is true, the greater part of that illustrious company, on the right hand of Christ, lived since the time of his incarnation, *for the great multitude which no man could number*, is derived from the gentile nations; *Rev.* vii. 9. Yet the ancient patriarchs, with the jewish prophets and saints, shall make a splendid appearance there: *One hundred and forty-four thousand are sealed among the tribes of Israel;* ver. 4. These of old embraced the gospel in types and shadows; but now their eyes behold Christ Jesus, the substance and the truth. In the days of their flesh they read his name in dark lines, and looked through the long glass of prophecy to distant ages, and a Saviour to come, and now behold they find complete and certain salvation and glory in him. *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them;*—Heb. xi. 13. They died in the hope of this salvation, and they shall arise in the blessed possession of it.

Behold Abraham appearing there, the father of the faithful, who *saw the day of Christ,*

and rejoiced to see it; John viii. 56. who trusted in his Son Jesus, two thousand years before he was born: His elder family, the pious Jews surround him there, and we, his younger children among the gentiles, shall stand with him as the followers of his faith, who trust in the same Jesus, almost two thousand years after he is dead. How shall we both rejoice to see this brightest day of the Son of man, and congratulate each other's faith, while our eyes meet and centre in him, and our souls triumph in the sight, love, and enjoyment of him, in whom we have believed! How admirable and divinely glorious shall our Lord himself appear, on whom every eye is fixed with unutterable delight, in whom the faith of distant countries and ages is centered and reconciled, and in whom *all the nations of the earth appear to be blessed*, according to the ancient word of promise; *Gen.* xii. 3. and xviii. 18.

Secondly, It is a further occasion of pleasing wonder, "that so many wicked, obstinate wills of men, and so many perverse affections should be bowed down, and submit themselves to the holy rules of the gospel." This is another instance of the grace of Christ, and shall be the subject of our joyful admiration. Every son and daughter of Adam, by nature, is averse to God, inclined to sin, a child of disobedience and death; *Eph.* ii. 2, 3. There is a new miracle wrought by Christ in every instance of converting grace, and he shall have the glory of them all in that day. It is a first resurrection from the dead, it is a new creation, and the almighty power shall then be publicly adored.

Then one shall say, "I was a sensual sinner, drenched in liquor and unclean lusts, and wicked in all the forms of lewdness and intemperance: *The grace of God my Saviour, appeared to me, and taught me to deny worldly lusts;* Tit. ii. 11, 12. which I once thought I could never have parted with. I loved my sins as my life, but he has persuaded and constrained me to *cut off a right hand*, and to *pluck out a right eye*, and to part with my darling vices; and behold me here a monument of his saving mercy."

"I was envious against my neighbour, shall another say, and my temper was malice and wrath; revenge was mingled with my constitution, and I thought it no iniquity: But I bless the name of Christ my Redeemer, who, in the day of his grace, turned my wrath into meekness; he inclined me *to love even my enemies, and to pray for them that cursed me;* he taught me all this by his own example, and he made me learn it by the sovereign influences of his Spirit. I am a wonder to myself, when I think what once I was: Amazing change, and almighty grace!"

Then a third shall confess, "I was a profane wretch, a swearer, a blasphemer; I hoped for no heaven, and I feared no hell; but the Lord seized me in the midst of my rebellions, and sent his arrows into my soul; he made me feel the stings of an awakened conscience, and constrained me to believe there was a God and a hell, till I cried out astonished, *What shall I do to be saved?* Acts xvi. 31. Then he led me to partake of his own salvation, and, from a proud rebellious infidel, he has made me a penitent and a humble believer, and here I stand to shew forth the wonders of his grace, and a boundless extent of his forgiveness."

A fourth shall stand up, and acknowledge in that day, "And I was a poor carnal, covetous creature, who made this world my God, and abundance of money was my heaven; but he cured me of this vile idolatry of gold, taught me how to obtain treasures in the heavenly world, and to forsake all on earth, that I might have an inheritance there; and behold he has not disappointed my hope: I am now made rich indeed, and I must for ever speak his praises." There shall be no doubt or dispute in that day, whether it was

the power of our own will, or the superior power of divine grace, that wrought the blessed change, that turned the lion into a lamb, a groveling earth-worm into a bird of paradise, and of a covetous or malicious sinner, made a meek and a heavenly saint. The grace of Christ shall be so conspicuous in every glorified believer in that assembly, that, with one voice, they shall all shout to the praise and glory of his grace? *Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to thy name be all the honour!* Psalm cxv. 1.

Thirdly, It shall be the matter of our wonder and the glory of Christ in that day, that so many thousand guilty wretches should be made righteous by one righteousness, cleansed in one laver from all their iniquities, and sprinkled unto pardon and sanctification with the blood of one man Jesus Christ. See the great multitude that no man could number; *Rev.* vii. 9, 10. They all *washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb*, verse 14.

It is a matter of wonder to us now on earth, that the blessed Son of God, who is one with the Father, should stoop so low as to unite himself to a mortal nature, that he should become a poor despicable man, and pass through a life of sufferings and sorrows, and die an accursed death to redeem us from guilt and deserved misery: But when we shall see him in his native glory and lustre, his acquired dignities, and all the honours of heaven heaped upon him, it will raise our wonder high to think, that such a one should once *humble himself to the death of the cross;* the death of the vilest slave, that he might save our souls from dying; that he should pour out his own blood to wash off the stains of millions of sins, that we might appear righteous before a God of holiness. Then shall the multitude of the saved join in that song, *To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, be glory and dominion for ever;* Rev. i. 5, 6. *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power and riches, and honour,—for thou hast redeemed us with thy blood from every kindred, tribe, and nation;* Rev. v. 9, 12.

Then shall those blessed words of scripture appear and shine in full glory, howsoever they are often passed over in silence, and too much forgotten in our age; *Rom.* v. 17, 19, 21. *If by one man's offence, death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners: So by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous. That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.* Then shall our blessed Lord shine in the complete lustre of that incommunicable name, Jehovah Tzidkenu, *the Lord our righteousness;* Jer. xxiii. 6.

And not only the atonement and salvation itself shall be the subject of our glorious admiration, but the way and manner how sinners partake of it shall minister further to our wonder, and to the glory of Christ. That such a world of poor miserable creatures should be saved from hell by believing or trusting in grace, when they could never be saved by all their own works; that they should obtain righteousness and acceptance unto eternal life, by an humble penitence and poverty of spirit, depending on the death and righteousness of another, when all their labour and toil in works of the law, could not make up a righteousness of their own sufficient to appear before the justice of God; Christ will not only be glorified in their holiness as saints, but admired and honoured in and by their faith as believers. His blood and his grace shall share all the glory. *Therefore it is of faith, and not of works that it might be of grace;* Rom. iv. 15. Yet this saving faith is the spring of shining holiness in every believer. Duties and virtues are not

left out of our religion, when faith is brought into it. The graces of the saints join happily with the atonement of Christ, to render that day more illustrious.

Fourthly, That a company of such feeble christians should maintain their course towards heaven through so many thousand obstacles: This shall be another subject of admiration, and yield a further revenue of glory to our Lord Jesus Christ, for he who is their righteousness, is their strength also, *Isaiah* xlv. 24, 25. *In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel glory* in that day as their strength and their salvation. They have broke through all their difficulties, and were *able to do all things through Christ strengthening them;* Phil. iv. 13.

Behold that noble army with palms in their hands; once they were weak warriors, yet they overcame mighty enemies, and have gained the victory and the prize; enemies rising from earth, and from hell, to tempt and to accuse them, but *they overcame by the blood of the Lamb;* Rev. xii. 7, 11. What a divine honour shall it be to our Lord Jesus Christ, *the captain of our salvation*, that weak christians should subdue their strong corruptions, and get safe to heaven through a thousand oppositions within and without: It is all owing to the grace of Christ, that grace which is all-sufficient for every saint; 2 *Cor.* xii. 9. They are made *more than conquerors through him that has loved them;* Rom. viii. 37.

Then shall the faith, and courage, and patience of the saints have a blessed review; and it shall be told before the whole creation, what strife and wrestlings a poor believer has passed through in a dark cottage, a chamber of long sickness, or perhaps in a dungeon; how he has there combated with *powers of darkness*, how he has struggled with huge sorrows, and has borne, and has not fainted, though he has been often *in heaviness through manifold temptations.* Then shall appear the bright scene which St. Peter represents as the event of sore trials, 1 *Peter* i. 6, 7. *When our faith has been tried in the* fire of tribulation *and is found more precious than gold*, it shall shine to the praise, honour, and glory of the suffering saints, and of Christ himself at his appearance.

Behold that illustrious troop of martyrs, and some among them of the feeblest sex, and of tender age? Now that women should grow bold in faith, even in the sight of torments, and children with a manly courage, should profess the name of Christ in the face of angry and threatening rulers; that some of these should become undaunted confessors of the truth, and others triumph in fire and torture, these things shall be matter of glory to Christ in that day; it was his power that gave them courage and victory in martyrdom and death. Every christian there, every soldier in that triumphing army, shall ascribe his conquest to the grace of his Lord, his leader, and lay down all their trophies at the feet of his Saviour, with humble acknowledgments, and shouts of honour.

Almost all the saved number were, at some part of their lives, weak in faith, and yet, by the grace of Christ they held out to the end, and are crowned. "I was a poor trembling creature, shall one say, but I was confirmed in my faith and holiness by the gospel of Christ, or, I rested on a naked promise and found support, because Christ was there, and he shall have the glory of it." *In him are all the promises yea, and in him amen, to the glory of the Father;* 2 Cor. i. 20—22. and the Son shall share in this glory, for he died to ratify these promises, and he lives to fulfil them.

"Oh, what an almighty arm is this, shall the believer say, that has borne up so many thousands of poor sinking creatures, and lifted their heads above the waves!" The spark of grace that lived many years in a flood of temptations, and was not quenched, shall then shine bright to the glory of Christ, who kindled and maintained it. When we have

been brought through all the storms and the threatening seas, and yet the raging waves have been forbid to swallow us up, we shall cry out in raptures of joy and wonder, *what manner of man is this, that the winds and the seas have obeyed him?* Mark iv. 41. Then shall it be gloriously evident that he has conquered Satan, and kept the hosts of hell in chains, when it shall appear, that he has made poor, mean, trembling believers victorious over all the powers of darkness, for the prince of peace has bruised him under their feet.

Fifthly, There is more work for our wonder and joy, and more glory for our blessed Lord, when we shall see that so many dark and dreadful providences were working together in mercy for the good of his saints: it is because Jesus Christ had the management of them all put into his hands; and we shall acknowledge *he has done all things well;* Mark vii. 37. *All things have wrought together for good;* Rom. viii. 28. It is the voice of Christ to every saint in sorrow, *What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter;* John xiii. 7. I saw not then, saith the christian, that my Lord was curing my pride by such a threatening and abasing providence, that he was weaning my heart from sensual delights, by such a sharp and painful wound; but now I behold things in another light, and give thanks and praises to my divine physician.

We shall look back upon the hours of our impatience and be ashamed, we shall chide the flesh for its old repinings, when we shall stand upon the eternal hills of paradise, and cast our eyes backward upon yonder transactions of time, those past ages of complaint and infirmity. We shall then with pleasure and thankfulness confess, that *the captain of our salvation* was much in the right to lead us through so many sufferings and sorrows, and we were much in the wrong to complain of his conduct.

Bear up your spirits then ye poor, afflicted, distressed souls, who are wrestling through difficult providences all in the dark, bear up but a little longer, *he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry;* Heb. x. 37. he will set all his conduct in a fair light, and you shall say, "Blessed be the Lord, and all his government."

Sixthly, That heaven should be so well filled out of such a hell of sin and misery as this world is, shall be another delightful reflection, full of wonder and glory. Take a short survey of mankind, how *all flesh has corrupted its ways before God, and every imagination of the thought of man's heart is only evil, and that continually;* Gen. vi. 5, 12. *There is none righteous, no not one;* Rom. iii. 10. Look round about you, and see how iniquity abounds, violence, oppression, pride, lust, sensualities of all kinds, how they reign among the children of men: Religion is lost, and God forgotten in the world; and yet out of this wretched world, Christ has provided inhabitants for heaven, where *nothing can enter that defileth;* Rev. xxi. 27. Look into your own hearts, ye sinners, see what a hell lies there, and ye converts of the grace of Christ, look into your hearts too, and see how many of the seeds of wickedness still lie hid there; how much corruption, and how little holiness; look inward and wonder, that Christ should ever fit you for heaven by his converting and his sanctifying grace.

Look round the world again, and survey the miseries of this earth: as many calamities as there are creatures, and perhaps ten times more: Who is there on earth without his sorrows? And sometimes, a multitude of them meet in one single sufferer: See how toil, and weariness, and disappointment, poverty and sickness, pain and anguish, and vexation are distributed through this world, that lies on the borders of hell; see all this and wonder at the grace of Christ, that has taken a colony out of this miserable world, and made a heaven of it.

We shall, many of us, be a wonder to each other, as well as to ourselves, and we shall all review and admire the grace of Christ in and towards us all. Among the rest there are two sorts of christians, whose salvation shall be a special matter of wonder, and these are the melancholy and the uncharitable. The melancholy christian shall wonder that ever such a sinner as himself was brought to heaven; and the uncharitable shall wonder how such a sinner as his neighbour came there. The poor doubting melancholy soul, who was full of fears, lest he should be condemned, shall then have full assurance that he is elected and redeemed, pardoned and saved, when he sees, hears, and feels the salvation and the glory upon him, within him, and all around him, and he shall admire and adore the grace of God his Saviour. The narrow-souled christian, who said his neighbour would be damned for want of some party-notions, or for some lesser failings, shall confess his uncharitable mistake, and shall wonder at the abounding mercy of Christ, which has pardoned those errors in his neighbour, for which he had excommunicated and condemned him. Both these christians in that day, I mean the timorous and the censorious, shall stand at his right hand as monuments of his surprising grace, who forgave one the defects of his faith, and the other his want of love; and their souls and their tongues shall join together to rejoice in the Lord, and their spirits shall magnify their God and Redeemer: Christ shall have his due revenue of glory from both in the hour of their public salvation.

Oh what honour shall it add to the overflowing mercy of Christ, what joy and wonder to all the saints to see Paul, the persecutor and blasphemer, there, and Peter, who denied the Lord that bought him, and Mary Magdalene, that impure sinner! See what a foul and shameful catalogue, what children of iniquity are at last made heirs and possessors of heaven; 1 *Cor.* vi. 9, 10. *The fornicators and idolaters, the thieves and the covetous, the drunkards, the revilers, and the extortioners.* Such they were in the days of ignorance and heathenism, fit fuel for the fire of hell; and in those circumstances they are utterly excluded from the kingdom of God, but now they find a place in that blessed assembly; and the converting grace of Christ is admired and glorified, that could turn such sinners into saints. O surprising scene of rich salvation, when these Corinthian converts washed in the blood of Christ, and renewed by his Spirit, shall appear in their white garments of holiness and glory! There is not one sinful creature to be found in all the vast retinue of the holy Jesus, but there are thousands who have been once great criminals, notorious sinners, and have been snatched by the arms of divine love, as brands out of the burning. What an affecting sight will it be, when we shall behold all the members of Christ united to their head, and complete in glory, and see at the same time, a world of vile sinners doomed to destruction! With what adoration and wonder shall we cry out, *And such were some of these* happy ones, *but they are sanctified, but they are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus,* and by *the Spirit of our God;* 1 Cor. v. 11. *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to God, our Saviour, be eternal honour;* Psalm cxv. 1.

In the seventh place, there is another glory and wonder added to this illustrious scene, and gives honour to our blessed Saviour, and that is, "That so many vigorous, beautiful, and immortal bodies should be raised at once out of the dust, with all their old infirmities left behind them:" Not one ache or pain, not one weakness or disease among all the glorified millions: As the Israelites came out of their bondage in Egypt, so shall the army of saints from the prison of the grave, and *not one feeble among them;* Psalm cv. 37. This is the work of Christ the Creator and the healer.

Here I might run many sorrowful divisions, and travel over the large and thorny fields of sickness and pains that attend human nature, those inborn mischiefs that vex poor christians in this state of trial and suffering. But these were all buried when the body went to the grave, and they are buried for ever; he that has the keys of death, shall let the bodies of his saints out of prison; but no gout, nor stone, no infirmity nor distemper, no head-ach nor heart-ach shall ever attend them. The body was *sown in weakness, but it is raised in power; it was sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory,* through the power of the second Adam, and his *quickening Spirit:* 1 Cor. xv. 43, 45. Rom. viii. 11.

Then shall Christ appear to be sovereign and Lord of death, when such an endless multitude of old and new captives are released at his word, and the grave has restored its prey; when those bodies which have been turned into dust some thousands of years, and their atoms scattered abroad by the winds of heaven, shall be raised again, in glory and dignity, *to meet* their descending *Lord in the air.* Surely Jesus, in that day, shall be acknowledged as a sovereign of nature, when, at the word of his command, a new creation shall arise, all perfect and immortal.

It will add yet farther glory to Christ, when we remember what fruitful seeds of iniquity were lodged in that flesh and blood which we wore on earth, and which we laid down in the tomb, and when, at the same time, we survey our glorified bodies, how spiritual, how holy, how happily fitted for the service of glorified souls made perfect in holiness. How did all the saints once complain of *a law in their members, that warred against the law of their minds, and brought them into bondage to the law of sin;* Rom. vii. 23. But this law of sin is now for ever abolished, this bondage dissolved and broken, and these members are all new-created for *instruments of righteousness* to serve God in his temple, for ever and ever. Holy Paul shall no more groan in a sinful tabernacle, he shall no more complain of that flesh, wherein no good thing dwelt, he shall cry out no more, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?* Rom vii. 24.

Many and bitter have been the sorrows of a holy soul in this world, because of the perverse dispositions of animal nature and the flesh: But none of the saints in that assembly shall ever feel again the stings of inward envy, the pricking thorns of peevishness, nor the wild ferments of wrath and passion: None of them shall ever find those unruly appetites, which wrought so strongly in their old flesh and blood, and too often overpowered their unwilling souls, those appetites which brought their consciences sometimes under fresh guilt, and filled them with inward reproaches and agonies of spirit. These evil principles are all destroyed by death, they are lost in the grave, and shall have no resurrection. The new-raised bodies of the righteous, in that day, shall be completely obedient to the dictates of their spirits, without any vicious juices to make reluctance, or perverse humours to raise an inward rebellion: And not only so, but perhaps even our bodies shall have some active holy tendencies wrought in them so far as corporeal nature can administer toward the sacred exercises of a glorified saint. A sweet and blessed change indeed! And Jesus, who raised these bodies, in this beauty of holiness, shall receive the glory of his divine work.

The last instance I shall mention, wherein Christ shall be admired in his saints, is this, "they shall all appear, in that day, as so many images of his person, and as so many monuments of the success of his office."

Is the blessed Jesus *a great prophet,* and the *teacher* of his church? These are the

persons that have learned his divine doctrine, they have heard *the joyful sound* of his gospel, and the holy truths of it are copied out in their hearts. These are the disciples of his school; and by his word, and by his Spirit, they have been taught to know God, and their Saviour, and they have been trained up in the way to eternal life.

Is Jesus *a great high-priest* both of sacrifice and intercession! Behold all these souls, an endless number, purified from their defilements by the blood of his cross, washed, and made white in that blessed laver, and reconciled to God by his atoning sacrifice: Behold the power of his intercession, in securing millions from the wrath of God, and in procuring for them every divine blessing. He has obtained for each of them grace and glory. Is Jesus the *Lord of all things*, and *the King* of his church? Behold his subjects waiting on him, a numerous and a loyal multitude, who have the laws of their king engraven on their souls. These are the sons and daughters of Adam, whom he has rescued, by his power, from the kingdom of darkness, and the hands of the devil: He has guarded them from the rage of their malicious adversaries in earth and hell, and brought them safe through all difficulties to behold the glories of this day, and to celebrate the honours of their king.

Is he the *Captain of Salvation?* See what a blessed army he has listed under his banner of love; and they have followed him, through all the dangers of life and time, under his conduct. These are *the chosen, the called, the faithful.* They have sustained many a sharp conflict, many a dreadful battle, and they are at last made *more than conquerors, through him that has loved them?* Rom. viii. 37. They attribute all their victories to the wisdom, the goodness, and the power of their divine Leader, and even stand amazed at their own success against such mighty adversaries: But they fought under the banner, conduct and influence of the Prince of life, the King of righteousness, who is always victorious, and has a crown in his hand for every conqueror.

Is Jesus the great example of his saints? Behold the virtues and graces of the Son of God copied out in all his followers. *As he was, so were they in this world, holy, harmless, and undefiled, and separate from sinners;* Heb. vii. 26. As he now is, so are they, glorious in holiness, and divinely beautiful, while each of them reflects the image of their blessed Lord, and they appear as wonders to all the beholding world. They were unknown here on earth, even as Christ himself was unknown: This is the day appointed to reveal their works, and their graces. Jesus is the *brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person;* Heb. i. 3. and all the sons and daughters of God shall then appear as so many pictures of the blessed Jesus, drawn by the finger of the eternal Spirit.

And not their souls only, but their glorified bodies also, are framed in his likeness. What grace and grandeur dwells in each countenance, "As thou art, O blessed Jesus, so shall they be, in that day, *all of them resembling the children of a king!* Judges viii. 18. Vigour and health, beauty and immortality shine and reign throughout all that blessed assembly. The adopted sons and daughters of God resemble the original and only-begotten Son: Christ will have all his brethren and sisters conformed unto his glories, that they may be known to be his kindred, the children of his Father, and that he *may appear the first-born among many brethren;* Rom. viii. 29. When the Son of God breaks open the graves, he forms the dust of his saints by the model of his own glorious aspect and figure, and *changes their vile bodies into the likeness of his own glorious body, by that power whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself;* Phil. iii. 21. He shall be

admired as the bright original, and each of the saints as a fair and glorious copy: The various beauties that are dispersed among all that assembly, are summed up, and united in himself: *He is the chiefest of ten thousands, and altogether lovely;* Cantic. v. 10, 16. One sun in the firmament can paint his own bright image, at once, upon a thousand reflecting glasses, or mirrors of gold: What a dazzling lustre would arise from such a scene of reflections? But what superior and inexpressible glory, above all the powers of similitude, and beyond the reach of comparison, shall irradiate the world in that day, when Jesus, *the Sun of righteousness,* shall shine upon all his saints, and find each of them well prepared to receive this lustre, and to reflect it round the creation; each of them displaying the image of the original Son of God, and confessing all their virtues and graces, all their beauties and glories, both of soul and body, to be nothing else but mere copies and derivations from Jesus, the first and fairest image of the Father!

Here this Discourse may be divided.

Use.—The doctrines and the works of divine grace are full of wonder and glory: Such is the person and offices of Christ, such are his holy and faithful followers, and such eminently will be the blessed scene at his appearance. In the foregoing part of the discourse, we have briefly surveyed some of those glorious wonders, we now come to consider what use may be made of such a theme.

I. It gives us eminently these two lessons of instruction:

1. "How mistaken is the judgment of flesh and sense in the things that relate to Christ, and his saints." The Son of God himself was abused and scorned by the blind world, they esteemed him as *one smitten of God,* and unbeloved, *and they saw no beauty nor comeliness in him;* Isaiah liii. 2, 3. He was poor and despised, all his life, and he was doomed to the death of a criminal and a slave. As for the saints, they find no more honour or esteem among men, than their Lord, they are many times called and counted *the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things;* 1 Cor. iv. 13. This is the judgment of flesh and sense.

But when the great appointed hour is come, and Jesus shall return from heaven *with a shout of the arch-angel, and the trump of God;* 1 Thess. iv. 16. when he shall call up his saints from their bed of dust and darkness, and make the graves resign those prisoners of hope; when they shall all gather together around their Lord, a bright and numerous army, shining and reflecting the splendors of his presence; how will the judgment of flesh and sense be confounded at once, and reversed with shame! "Is this the man that was loaded with scandal, that was buffeted with scorn, and scourged, and crucified in the land of Judea? Is this the person that hung on the cursed tree, and expired under agonies of pain and sorrow? Amazing sight! How majestic, how divine his appearance! The Son of God, and the King of glory! And are these the men that were made the mockery of the world? That *wandered about in sheep-skins, and goat-skins, in dens and caves of the earth?* Heb. xi. 37. Surprising appearance! How illustrious! How full of glory! Oh that such a meditation might awaken us to judge more by faith!"

2. The next lesson that we may derive from the text is this, *viz.* "One great design of the day of judgment, is, to advance and publish the glory of Christ." He shall come

on purpose *to be glorified in his saints;* the whole creation was made by him, and for him; the transactions of providence, grace, and justice, are managed for his honour; and the joyful and terrible affairs of the day of judgment are designed to display the majesty and the power of Jesus the King, the wisdom and equity of Jesus the Judge, and the grace and truth of Jesus the Saviour. I will grant, indeed, that the appointment of this day is partly intended for the glory of Christ, in the just destruction of the impenitent, for he will be glorified in pouring out the vengeance of his Father upon rebellious sinners: *The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;* verses 7—9. before my text. But his sweetest and most valuable revenue of glory arises from among his saints.

If the messengers of the churches are called *the glory of Christ*, with all the weaknesses, and sins, and follies, that attend the best of them here, as in 2 *Cor.* viii. 23. much more shall they be his glory hereafter, when they shall have *no spot nor blemish* found upon them, and the work of Christ upon their souls has formed and finished them in the perfect *beauty of holiness.* The saints shall reflect glory on each other, and all of them cast supreme lustre on Christ their head: The people shall be the crown and glory of the minister in that day, and the minister shall be the joy and glory of the people, and both shall be the crown, joy, and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ; 1 *Thess.* ii. 19, 20. 2 *Cor.* i. 14. 2 *Thess.* i. 12. He shall appear high on a throne in the midst of that bright assembly, and say, "Father, these are the sheep that thou hast given me in the counsels of thy eternal love: All these have I ransomed from hell, at the price of my own blood; these have I rescued by my grace from the dominion of sin and the devil; I have formed them unto holiness, and fitted them for heaven; I have kept them, by my power, through all the dangers of their mortal state, and have brought them safe to thy celestial kingdom: *All thine are mine, and all mine are thine;* I was glorified in them on earth; *John* xvii. 10. and they are now my everlasting crown and glory.

Then shall the unknown worlds that never fell, worlds of angels and innocent creatures, and the world of guilty devils and condemned rebels, stand and wonder together at the recovery and salvation Christ has provided for the fallen sons of Adam. They shall stand amazed to see the millions of apostate creatures, the inhabitants of this earthly globe, recovered to their duty and allegiance, by the Son of God going down to dwell amongst them: Millions of impure and deformed souls restored to the divine image, and made beautiful as angels, by the grace and Spirit of our Lord Jesus. Those spectators shall be filled with admiration and transport, to see such a multitude of criminals pardoned and justified, for the sake of a righteousness which they themselves never wrought, and accepted as righteous in the sight of God, by a covenant of grace unknown to other worlds, and by faith in the great Mediator. They shall wonder to see such an innumerable company of polluted wretches, washed from their sins in so precious a laver as the blood of God's own Son: And he that hung upon the cross, as a spectacle of wretchedness at Jerusalem, shall entertain the superior and inferior worlds with the sight of his adorable and divine glories, and the spoils he has brought from the regions of death and hell. Thus *to the principalities and powers in heavenly places, shall be made known by the church* triumphant, *the manifold wisdom*, and the manifold grace of God the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ; *Eph.* iii. 10.

But tremble, O ye obstinate and impenitent wretches, ye sensual sinners, ye infidels of a christian name and nation, Christ will be glorified in you, one way or another: If your hearts are not bowed and melted to receive his gospel, you shall be *punished with everlasting destruction among those that know not God, and obey not the gospel of his Son.*

Tremble, ye sensual and ye profane sons of iniquity, when ye remember this day, when ye shall see the holy souls that ye scorned, *with crowns on their heads, and palms in their hands,* with the shout of victory, and joy on their tongues, and the god-man, whom ye despised, and whose grace ye neglected, shining at the head of that bright assembly.

Tremble, ye infidels, ye despisers of the name of a crucified Christ, behold his cross is become a throne, and his crown of thorns a crown of glory: See the man whom ye have scorned and reproached, at the head of millions of angels, and adored by *ten thousand times ten thousand* saints, while wicked princes and captains, armies and nations of sinners, wait their doom from his mouth, nor dare hope for a word of his mercy. O make haste, and come and be reconciled to him, and to God by him, that ye may belong to that blessed assembly, that ye may bear a part in the triumphs of that day, and that Christ may be glorified in your recovery from the very borders of damnation. This thought leads me to the next use.

II. This discourse gives "rich encouragement to the greatest sinners to hope for mercy, and to the weakest saints to hope for victory and salvation." Such sort of subjects of the grace of Christ, shall yield him some of the brightest rays of glory at the last day. Yet, sinners, let me charge you here, never to hope for this happiness without solemn repentance, and an entire change of heart unto holiness, for an unholy soul would be a fearful blemish in that assembly, and a disgrace to our Lord Jesus. Christians, I would charge you also, never to hope for the happiness of this day without battle and conquest, for all the members of that assembly must be overcomers: But where there is a hearty desire and longing after grace and salvation, let not the worst of sinners despair, nor the weakest believer let go his hope; for it is such as you and I are, in whom Christ will be magnified in that day.

Believe this, O thou humbled and convinced sinner, who complainest thy heart is hard, though thou wouldest fain repent and mourn; who fearest the bonds of thy corruptions are so strong, that they shall never be broken, believe that the sovereign grace of Christ has designed to exalt itself in the sanctification of such unholy souls as thou art, and in melting such hard hearts as thine. And thou, poor trembling soul, that wouldest fain trust in a Saviour, but art afraid, because of the greatness of thy guilt, and thy abounding iniquities, believe this, *that where sin has abounded, grace has much more abounded;* Rom. v. 20. It is from the bringing such sinners as thou art to heaven, that the choicest revenues of glory shall arise to our Lord Jesus Christ, and thy acclamations of joy and honour to the Saviour shall perhaps be loudest in that day, *when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe.*

Read the 1 *Tim.* i. 13, 14. and see there what an account the great apostle gives of his own conversion: *I was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, yet I obtained mercy; and the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love, which is in Jesus Christ.* Now I am sent to publish and preach to blasphemers and persecutors, that *this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit, for this cause I obtained mercy,*

that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting; verses 15, 16.

Turn to another text, ye feeble believers; 2 *Cor.* xii. 9, 10. there you shall find the same apostle a convert and a christian, but too weak to conflict with the messenger of Satan that buffeted him, nor able to release himself from that sore temptation that lay heavy upon him; but having received a word from Christ, that his *grace was sufficient*, and that his strength was to shine perfect in glory, in the midst of our weakness, the apostle encourages himself to a joyful hope: Now, says he, I can even glory in my infirmities, so far as they are without sin, *that the power of Christ may rest upon me; when I am weak* in myself, *I am strong* in the Lord. Are not the most diseased patients the chief honours of the physician that hath healed them? And must not these appear eminently in that day, when he displays to the sight of the world the noblest monuments of his healing power? When cripples and invalids gain the victory over mighty enemies, is not the skill and conduct of their leader most admired? You are the persons, then, in whom Christ will be glorified, be of good cheer, receive his offered grace, and wait for his salvation.

III. The next use I shall make of this discourse, is to draw a word of advice from it. "Learn to despise those honours and ornaments in this world, in which Christ shall have no share in the world to come." I do not say, cast them all away, for many things are needful in this life, that can have no immediate regard to the other; but learn to despise them, and set light by them, because they reach no further than time, and shall be forgotten in eternity. Never put the higher esteem on yourselves, or your neighbours, because of the gay glitterings of silk or silver; nor let these employ your eyes and your thoughts in the time of worship, when the things of the future world should fill up all your attention; nor let them entertain your tongues in your friendly visits, so as to exclude the discourse of divine ornaments, and the glorious appearance of our Lord Jesus.

When I am to put on my best attire, let me consider, if I am hung round with jewels and gold, these must perish before that solemn day, or melt in the last great burning; they can add no beauty to me in that assembly. If I put on love and faith, and humility, I shall shine in these hereafter, and Christ shall have some rays of glory from them. Oh, may your souls and mine be dressed in those graces which are *ornaments of great price in the sight of God;* 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4. Such as may command the respect of angels, and reflect honour upon Christ in that solemnity! I confess, we dwell in flesh and blood, and human nature, in the best of us, is too much impressed by things sensible: When we see a train of human pomp and grandeur, and long ranks of shining garments and equipage, it is ready to dazzle our eyes, and attract our hearts: Vain pomp and poor equipage all this, when compared with the triumph of our blessed Lord, at his appearance, with an endless army of his holy ones; where every saint shall be vested, not in silks and gold, but in robes of refined light, outshining the sun, such as Christ himself wore in the mount of transfiguration. Millions of suns in one firmament of glory. Think on that day, and the illustrious retinue of our Lord: Think on that splendour that shall attract the eyes of heaven and earth, shall confound the proud sinner, and astonish the inhabitants of hell: Such a meditation as this will cast a dim shadow over the brightest appearances of a court, or a royal festival; it will spread a dead colouring over all the painted vanities of this life; it will damp every thought of rising ambition and earthly pride, and we shall have but little heart to admire or wish for any of the vain shews of

mortality. Methinks every gaudy scene of the present life, and all the gilded honours of courts and armies, should grow faint, and fade away and vanish at the meditation of this illustrious appearance.

IV. This text will give us also two hints of caution.

First, " You that are rich in this world, or wise, or mighty, dare not ridicule nor scoff at those poor weak christians, in whom Christ shall be admired and glorified in the last day." You that fancy you have any advantages of birth or beauty, of mind or body, here on earth, dare not make a jest of your poor pious neighbour, that wants them, for he is one of those persons whom Christ calls his glory, and he himself has given you warning, lest you incur his resentment on this account; Matt. xviii. 6. *Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.* Perhaps the good man has some blemish in his outward form, or, it may be, his countenance is dejected, or his mien and figure aukward and uncomely; perhaps his garments sit wrong and unfashionable upon him, or, it may be, they hang in tatters; the motions of his body, perhaps, are ungraceful, his speech improper, and his deportment is simple and unpolished; but he has shining graces in his soul, in which Christ shall be admired in the last day, and how darest thou make him thy laughing-stock? Wilt thou be willing to hear thy scornful jest repeated again at that day, when the poor derided christian has his robes of glory on, and the Judge of all shall acknowledge him for one of his favourites?

The second hint of caution is this, " you that shall be the glory of Christ in that day, dare not do any thing that may dishonour him now." Walk answerable to your character and your hope, nor indulge the least sinful defilement. Say within yourselves, " Am I to make one in that splendid retinue of my Lord, where every one must appear in robes of holiness, and shall I spot my garments with the flesh? When I am provoked to anger and indignation, let me say, doth wrath and bluster become a follower and an attendant of the meek and peaceful Jesus? When I am tempted to pride and vanity of mind, will this be a beauty or a blemish to that assembly, that shines in glorious humility? Or, perhaps, I am wavering, and ready to yield, and become a captive to some foolish temptation; but how then can I expect a place in that holy triumph, which is appointed for none but conquerors? And how shall I be able to look my blessed General in the face on that day, if I prove a coward under his banner, and abandon my profession of strict holiness, at the demand of a sinful and threatening world?"

V. The last use I shall make of the text, is matter of consolation and joy to two sorts of christians.

First, To the poor, mean, and despised followers of Christ, and in whom Christ himself is despised by the ungodly world. Read my text, and believe, that in you Christ shall be glorified and admired, when, with a million of angels, he shall descend from heaven, and make his last appearance upon earth; mean as you are in your own esteem, because of your ignorance and your weakness in this world, you shall be one of the glories of Christ in the world to come: Little and despicable as you are in the esteem of proud sinners, they shall behold your Lord exalted on his throne, and you sitting among the honours at his right hand, while they shall rage afar off, and gnash their teeth at your glory: When the eye of faith is open, it can spy this bright hour at a distance, and bid the mourning christian rejoice in hope.

Secondly, There is comfort also in my text to those who mourn for the dishonour of

Christ in the world; those lively members of the mystical body, who sympathize with the blessed head under all the reproaches that are cast upon him and his gospel, who groan under the load of scandal that is thrown upon Christ in an infidel age, as though it were personally thrown upon themselves. It is matter of lamentation, indeed, that there are but few of this sort of christians in our day, few that love our Lord Jesus with such tenderness; but if such there be among you, open your eyes, and look forward to this glorious day. This day, to which Enoch, the first of all the prophets, and John, the last of all the apostles, directs our faith. Read their own words; Jude 14, 15. *Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all, that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all the hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.* Rev. i. 7. *Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him. And all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.* Bear up your hearts, ye mourners, and support your hopes with the promise of our Lord. *Again, a little while, and ye shall see me;* John. xvi. 17. shall see the Son of man sitting on the throne of his glory. *Matt.* xxv. 31. "Then shall your heart rejoice in his honours, and in your own, and this joy no man taketh from you;" *John* xvi. 19, 22. And while he repeats this promise with his last words in the Bible, *Surely, I come quickly*, let every soul of us echo to the voice of our beloved, *Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus.*

DISCOURSE V.

THE WRATH OF THE LAMB.

REV. vi. 15, 16, 17.

AND THE KINGS OF THE EARTH, AND THE GREAT MEN, AND THE RICH MEN, AND THE CHIEF CAPTAINS, AND THE MIGHTY MEN, AND EVERY BONDMAN, AND EVERY FREEMAN, HID THEMSELVES IN THE DENS, AND IN THE ROCKS OF THE MOUNTAINS; AND SAID TO THE MOUNTAINS AND ROCKS, FALL ON US, AND HIDE US FROM THE FACE OF HIM THAT SITTETH ON THE THRONE, AND FROM THE WRATH OF THE LAMB: FOR THE GREAT DAY OF HIS WRATH IS COME; AND WHO SHALL BE ABLE TO STAND?

WHEN some terrible judgment, or execution of divine vengeance, is denounced against an age or a nation, it is sometimes described in the language of prophecy by a resemblance to the last and great judgment-day, when all mankind shall be called to account for their sins, and the just and final indignation of God shall be executed upon obstinate and unrepenting criminals. The discourse of our Saviour, in the xxiv. chapter of Matthew, is an eminent example of this kind; where the destruction of the jewish nation is predicted, together with the final judgment of the world, in such uniform language, and similar phrases of speech, that it is difficult to say, whether both these scenes of vengeance run through the whole discourse, or which part of the discourse belongs to the one, and which to the other. The same manner of prophecy appears in this text.

Learned interpreters suppose these words to foretel the universal consternation, which was found amongst the heathen idolaters and persecutors of the church of Christ, when Constantine, the first christian emperor, was raised to the throne of Rome, and became governor of the world. But whether they hit upon the proper application of this prophecy, or not, yet still it is pretty evident, that this scene of terror is borrowed from the last judgment, which will eminently appear to be the day of wrath, as it is called; *Rom.* ii. 5. It is the great day of divine indignation in so eminent a manner, that all the tremendous desolations of kingdoms and people, from the creation of the world to the consummation of all things, shall be but as shadows of that day of terror and vengeance.

I shall therefore consider these words, at present, as they contain a solemn representation of that last glorious and dreadful day; and here I shall enquire particularly,

I. Who are the persons, whose aspect and appearance shall then be so dreadful to sinners.

II. How comes the wrath, which discovers itself at that time, to be so formidable; and,

III. How vain will all the shifts and hopes of sinners be, in that dreadful day, to avoid the wrath and vengeance.

First, Who are the persons that appear clothed in so much terror?

Answer. It is he that sits upon the throne and the Lamb: It is God, the Father of all, the great and almighty Creator, the supreme Lord and Governor of the world, and the Lamb of God, that is, our Lord Jesus Christ his Son, dwelling in human nature, to whom the judgment of the world is committed, and by whom the Father will introduce the terrible and the illustrious scenes of that day, and manage the important and eternal affairs of it. It is by these names that the apostle John, in this prophetical book, describes God the Father, and his Son Jesus; *Rev.* iv. 10. and v. 6—13.

If it be enquired, why God the Father is described as the person sitting on the throne, this is plainly agreeable to the other representations of him throughout the scripture; where he is described as first and supreme in authority, as sitting on the throne of majesty on high, as denoting and commissioning the Lord Jesus, his well-beloved Son, to act for him, and as placing him on his throne to execute his works of mercy or vengeance; Rev. iii. 21. *He that overcometh shall sit down with me on my throne*, saith our Saviour, *even as I have overcome, and am set down with the Father on his throne.* John v. 22—27. *The Father has committed all judgment into the hands of the Son.* It is true, the godhead, or divine essence, is but one, and it is the same godhead which belongs to the Father, that dwells in the Son; and in this respect, "Christ and the Father are one, he is in the Father, and the Father in him; *John* x. 30, 38. yet the Father is constantly exhibited in scripture with peculiar characters of prime authority, and the Son is represented as receiving all from the Father; *John* v. 19, 20, 22, 26, 27.

If it be farther enquired, Why Christ is called *the Lamb of God*, I shall not pursue those many fine metaphors and similies, in which the wit and fancy of men have run a long course on this subject, but shall only mention these two things:

1. He is called the Lamb, from the innocence of his behaviour, the quietness and meekness of his disposition and conduct in the world. The character of Jesus among men was peaceful and harmless, and patient of injuries; *when he was reviled, he reviled not again, but was led as a Lamb to the slaughter*, with submission, and without revenge. This resemblance appears, and is set forth to view, in several scriptures, wherein he is compared to this gentle creature; *Acts* viii. 32. 1 *Pet.* ii. 23.

2. He is called the Lamb, because he was appointed a sacrifice for the sins of men; John i. 29. *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.* 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. *You were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish, and without spot.* It was a Lamb, that was ordained for the constant daily sacrifice amongst the Jews morning and evening, to typify the constant and everlasting influence of the atonement made by the death of Christ; *Heb.* x. 11, 12. It was a Lamb which was sacrificed at the passover, and on which the families of Israel feasted, to commemorate their redemption from the slavery of Egypt, and to typify Christ, who *is our passover, who was sacrificed for us*, and for whose sake the destroying angel spares all that trust in him; 1 *Cor.* v. 7.

But will a Lamb discover such dreadful wrath? Has the Lamb of God such indignation in him? Can the meek, the compassionate, the merciful Son of God, put on such terrible forms and appearances? Are his tender mercies vanished quite away, and will he renounce the kind aspect and the gentle language of a Lamb for ever?

To this I answer, that the various glories and offices of our blessed Lord require a variety of human metaphors and emblems to represent them. He was a Lamb, full of gentleness, meekness, and compassion, to invite and encourage sinful perishing creatures

to accept of divine mercy: But he has now to deal with obstinate and rebellious criminals, who renounce his Father's mercy, and resist all the gentle methods of his own grace and salvation: And he is sent by the Father to punish those rebellions, but he is named the Lamb of God still, to put the rebels in mind what gentleness and compassions they have affronted and abused, and to make it appear that their guilt is utterly inexcusable. Let us remember, Christ is now a Lamb raised to the throne in heaven, and furnished and armed *with seven eyes and seven horns;* Rev. v. 5, 6. with perfect knowledge and perfect power to govern the world, to vindicate his own honour, and to avenge himself upon his impenitent and obstinate enemies. Here the Lamb will assume the name of *the lion of the tribe of Judah* also, and he must act in different characters, according to the persons he has to deal with.

The second general question which we are to consider is, "How comes the wrath of that great day to be so terrible?" I answer, in general, because it is not only the wrath of God, but of the Lamb: It is the wrath that is manifested for the affronts of divine authority, and the abuse of divine mercy: It is wrath that is awakened by the contempt of the laws of God, written in the books of nature and scripture, and for the contempt of his love, revealed in the gospel by Jesus Christ. It is proper to observe here, that the wrath of God, and the wrath of the Lamb, are not to be conceived as exactly the same, for it is the wrath of the Son of God, in his human nature exalted, as well as the displeasure of God the Father: It is the righteous and holy resentment of the man Jesus, awakened and let loose against rebellious creatures, that have broken all the rules of his Father's government, and have refused all the proposals of his Father's grace: It is the wrath of the highest, the greatest, and the best of creatures, joined to the wrath of an offended Creator.* But let us enter a little into particulars:

1. It is righteous wrath, and just and deserved vengeance, that arises from the clearest discoveries of the love of God neglected, and the sweetest messages of divine grace refused. All the former discoveries of the love of God to men, both in nature and providence, as well as by divine revelation, whether made by men or by angels, whether in the days of the patriarchs, or in the days of Moses and the Jews, were far inferior to the grace which was revealed by Jesus Christ; and therefore the sin of rejecting it is greater in proportion, and the punishment will be more severe. *If the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward,—How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation,* as this *which began to be spoken by our Lord?* Heb. ii. 2—4.

Moses had many true discoveries of grace made to him, and intrusted with him for sinful men: But the scripture saith, John i. 17. *The law came by Moses, and grace and truth came by Jesus Christ;* that is, in such super-abundance, as though grace and truth

* Here let it be observed, that when the holy scripture speaks of the "wrath and indignation of the blessed God," we are not to understand it, as though God was subject to such passions or affections of nature, as we feel fermenting or working within ourselves, when our anger rises; but because the justice, or rectoral wisdom of God, inclines him to bring natural evil, pain, or sorrow upon those who are obstinately guilty of moral evil or sin, and to treat them as anger or wrath inclines men to treat those that have offended them, and therefore the scripture, speaking after the manner of men, calls it the "wrath and indignation of God."

And it is hard to say, whether or no the *wrath of the Lamb,* that is, of the man Christ Jesus, in whom Godhead dwells, be any thing more than the calm, dispassionate, rectoral wisdom of the human nature of Christ, inclining him to punish rebellious and impenitent sinners, in conformity to the will of God his Father, or in concurrence with the Godhead which dwells in him.

had never appeared in the world before. The forgiving mercy of God, under the veil of ceremonies and sacrifices, and the mediation of Christ, under the type of the high priest, was but a dark and imperfect discovery, in comparison of the free, the large, the full forgiveness, which is brought to us by the gospel of Christ. Learn this doctrine at large from *Heb.* x. 1—14. This is amazing mercy, astonishing grace, and the despisers of it will deserve to perish with double destruction, for they wink their eyes against clearer light, and reject the offers of more abounding love.

2. It is wrath that is awakened by the most precious and most expensive methods of salvation slighted and undervalued. Well may God say to christian nations, especially to Great Britain, who sits under the daily sound of this gospel, *What could I have done more for you than I have done?* Isaiah v. 4. "I have sent my own Son, the Son of my bosom, the Son of my eternal love, to take flesh and blood upon him, that he might be able to die in your stead, who were guilty rebels, and deserved to die: I have given him up to the insults and injuries of men, to the temptations, the buffetings and rage of devils, to the stroke of the sword of my justice, to the cursed death of the cross for you; here is heaven and salvation purchased for man with the dearest and most valuable life in all the creation, with the richest blood that ever ran in the veins of a creature, with the life and blood of the Son of God, and yet you refused to receive and accept of this salvation, procured at so immense a price. I called you to partake of this invaluable blessing freely, *without money, and without price*, and yet you slighted all these offers of mercy; what remains but that my wrath should kindle against you in the hottest degree, and fill your souls with exquisite anguish and misery? You have refused to accept of a covenant which was sealed with the blood of my own Son, which was confirmed by the miraculous operations of my own Spirit; you have valued your sinful pleasures, and the trifles of this vain world, above the blood of my Son, and the life of your souls: It is divinely proper, that divine vengeance should be your portion, who have rejected such rich treasures of divine love." Heb. x. 28—31. *He that despised Moses's law, died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, vengeance belongeth unto me, I will repay, saith the Lord.*

3. It is wrath that must avenge the affronts and injuries done to the prime minister of God's government, and the chief messenger of his mercy. All the patriarchs, and the prophets, and angels themselves, were but servants to bring messages of divine grace to men: And some of them, in awful forms and appearances, represented the authority of God too: But the Son of God is the prime minister of his government, and the noblest ambassador of his grace, and the chief deputy or vicegerent in his Father's kingdom. See *Heb.* i. 1, 2. *Psalm* ii. 6, 9, 12. His Father's glory and grandeur, compassion and love, are most sublimely exhibited in the face of Christ his Son, and God will not have his highest and fairest image disgraced and affronted, without peculiar and signal vengeance.

The great God will vindicate the honours of his Son Jesus, in the infinite destruction of a rebellious and unbelieving world: And the Son himself hath wrath and just resentment: he will vindicate his own authority, and his commission of grace. He hath *a rod of iron* put into his hands, as well as a sceptre of mercy, and with his rod will he break

to pieces rebellious nations; *Rev.* ii. 27. It is not fit, that the first minister of the empire of the King of heaven, and the brightest image of his majesty, and of his love, should appear always in the character of a lamb, a meek and unresenting creature. He will put on the lion, when his commission of grace is ended: He is *the lion of the tribe of Judah*, Rev. v. 5. *and will rend the caul of the heart* of those unrepenting sinners, who have resisted his authority, and abused his love.

And how will the wrath of the Lamb of God penetrate the soul of sinners with intense anguish, when the meek and compassionate Jesus shall be commissioned and constrained to speak the language of resentment and divine indignation?

" Did you not hear of me, sinners, in yonder world, which lies weltering in flames? Did you not read of me in the gospel of my grace? Did you not learn my character and my salvation in the ministrations of my word? Were you not told that I was appointed to be the Saviour of a lost world, and a minister of divine mercy to men? And was there not abundant evidence of it by miracles and prophesies? Were you not told that I was exalted, after my sufferings, to the right hand of God, on purpose to " bestow *repentance and remission of sins?*" Acts v. 31. And were you not informed also, that I had *a rod of iron* given me, to dash rebels to death? *Psalm* ii. 9. What is the reason you never came to me, or submitted to my government, or accepted of my grace? Did you never hear of the threatenings that stood, like drawn swords, against those who wilfully refuse this mercy? Did you think these were mere bugbears, mere sounding words, to fright children with, and harmless thunder, that would never blast you? Did you think these flashes of wrath, in my word, were such sort of lightnings as you might safely play with, and flame that would never burn? What punishments think you do you deserve, first, for the abuse of my authority, and then for the wilful and obstinate refusal of my grace? Is it not divinely fit and proper my wrath should awake against such heinous criminals? Where is any proper object for my resentment if you are not made objects of it? Take them, angels, *bind them hand and foot, and cast them into outer darkness:* Let them be thrown headlong into the prison of hell, where fire and brimstone burn unquenchably, where light, and peace, and hope can never come. Let them be crushed with the rod of iron, which the Father hath put into my hands, as the first minister of his kingdom, as the avenger of his despised grace?"

4. It is a wrath that is excited by a final and utter rejection of the last proposals of divine love. When mercy was offered to men by the blessed God at first, the discoveries were more dark and imperfect, there were still further discoveries to be made in following ages: Therefore the crime and guilt of sinners, in those former days, was much less than the crime and guilt of those who reject this last proposal of mercy. There is no farther edition of the covenant of grace for those who refuse this offer. Those who neglect Christ, as he is set forth in the gospel to be a sacrifice for sin, *there remains no more sacrifice for them, but a certain fearful expectation of vengeance and fiery indignation, which shall consume the adversary;* Heb. x. 26, 28.

All the former dispensations of grace are contained eminently and completed in this dispensation of the gospel. God can send no greater messenger than his own Son, and he concludes and finishes the whole scene and period of grace with the gospel of Christ. There remains nothing but wrath to the uttermost for those who have abused this last offer of mercy. This was exemplified in the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jews, a little after they had put Christ to death, and rejected the salvation which he proposed;

and this wrath will be more terribly glorified in the final destruction of every sinner that wilfully rejects the glad tidings of this salvation.

5. It is such wrath as arises from the patience of a God tired and worn out by the boldest iniquities of men, and by a final perseverance in their rebellions. It is the character and glory of God to be *long-suffering, and slow to anger.* Exod. xxxiv. 6. *The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth;* and Jesus his Son is the minister of this his patience, and the intercessor for this delay of judgment and vengeance. He is represented as interceding one year after another for the reprieve of obstinate sinners, and at his intercession God the Father waits to be gracious: But God will not wait and delay, and keep silence for ever, nor will Jesus for ever plead, Psalm l. 1, 3, 21, 22. *Consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.* God will say then to obstinate sinners as he did to the Jews of old, Jer. xv. 6. *I will stretch out my hand against thee, and destroy thee, I am weary of repenting:* And even the abused patience of Jesus the Saviour shall turn into fury, when *the day of recompence shall come, and the day of vengeance which is in his heart;* Isaiah lxiii. 1, 4.

O let each of us consider, "How long have I made the grace of God wait on me? How many messages of peace and pardon have I neglected? How many years have I delayed to accept of this salvation, and made Jesus wait on an impenitent rebel, with the commission of mercy in his hand, while I have refused to receive it? Let my soul be this day awakened to lay hold of the covenant of grace, to submit to the gospel of Christ, lest to-morrow the days of his commission of mercy toward me expire, lest the patience of a God be finished, lest the abused love of a Saviour turn into fury, and nothing remains for me but unavoidable destruction.

6. It is a sentence of divine wrath, which shall be attended with the fullest conviction of sinners, and self-condemnation in their own consciences. This doubles the sensations of divine wrath, and enhances the anguish of the criminal to a high degree.

This final unbelief and rejection of grace, is a sin against so much light, and so much love, that however men cheat their consciences now, and charm them into silence, yet at the last great day their own consciences shall be on the side of the Judge, when he pronounces wrath and damnation upon them, what infinite terrors will shake the soul when there is not one of its own thoughts can speak peace within? When all its own inward powers shall echo to the sentence of the Judge, and acknowledge the justice and equity of it for ever?

Oh! who can express the agonies of pain and torture, when the impenitent sinner shall be awakened into such reflections as these? "I was placed in a land of light and knowledge; the light of the gospel of grace shone all round me, but I winked my eyes against the light, and now I am plunged into utter and eternal darkness. I was convinced often that I was a sinner, and in danger of death and hell, I was convinced of the truth of the gospel, and the all-sufficiency of the salvation of Christ, but I loved the vanities of this life; I followed the appetites of the flesh, and the delusive charms of a tempting world; I delayed to answer to the voice of providence and the voice of mercy, the voice of the gospel inviting me to this salvation, and the voice of Christ requiring me to be saved. My own heart condemns me with ten thousand reproaches: How righteous is God in his indignation! How just is the resentment of the Lamb of God in this day of his wrath!

What clear, and convincing, and dreadful equity attends the sentence of my condemnation, and doubles the anguish of my soul!"

7. It is such wrath as shall be executed immediately and eternally, without one hour of reprieve, and without the least hope of mercy, and that through all the ages to come: For though Jesus is *the Mediator between God and man*, to reconcile those to God who have broken his law, there is no Mediator appointed to reconcile those sinners to Christ, when they have finally resisted the grace of his gospel. There is no blood nor death that can atone for the final rejection of the blood of this dying Saviour. If we resist Jesus Christ the Lord, and his atonement, and his sacrifice, his gospel, and his salvation, *there remains no more atonement* for us. Let us consider each of these circumstances apart, and dwell a little on these terrors, that our hearts may be affected with them.

1. This wrath shall be executed immediately, for the time of reprieve is come to an end. Here divine wisdom and justice have set the limits of divine patience, and they reach no further.

2. It is wrath that shall be executed without mercy, because the day and hour of mercy is for ever finished. That belongs only to this life. The day of grace is gone for ever: *He that* once *made them, will now have no mercy upon them, and he that formed them, will shew them no favour;* Isaiah xxvii. 11. The very mercy of the Mediator, the compassion of the Lamb of God, is turned into wrath and fury. The Lamb himself has put on the form of a lion, and there is no redeemer or advocate to speak a word for them, who have finally rejected Jesus, the only Mediator, worn out the age of his pity, and provoked his wrath, as well as his Father's.

3. It is wrath without end, for their souls are immortal, their bodies are raised to an immortal state, and their whole nature being sinful, and miserable, and immortal, they must endure a wretched and miserable immortality. This is the representation of the book of God, even of the New Testament, and I have no commission from God, either to soften these words of terror, or to shorten the term of their misery.

REMARKS ON THIS DISCOURSE.

I. "What a wretched mistake is it, to imagine the great God is nothing else but mercy, and Jesus Christ is nothing else but love and salvation." It is true, God has more mercy than we can imagine; his love is boundless in many of its exercises, and Jesus his Son, who is the image of the Father, is the fairest image of his love and grace. His compassions have *heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths in them, that pass all our knowledge;* Eph. iii. 18. But God is a universal sovereign, a wise and righteous governor: There is majesty with him, as well as grace; and Jesus *is Lord of lords, and King of kings:* He bears the image of his Father's justice, as well as of his Father's love; otherwise he could not be the full *brightness of his glory, nor the express image of his person;* Heb. i. 3.

And besides, the Father hath armed him with powers of divine vengeance, as well as with powers of mercy and salvation. *Psalm* ii. 9. He has put the *rod of iron into his hands, to dash the nations like a potter's vessel;* Rev. ii. 27. and xix. 15. He is the *elect and precious corner-stone laid in Zion;* 1 Pet. ii. 6. But he is a stone that *will bruise those who stumble at him, and those on whom he shall fall, he will grind them to powder;* Matt. xxi. 44. He is a lamb and a lion too: He can suffer at Jerusalem and mount Calvary with silence, *and not open his mouth,* Isaiah liii. 7. and he can roar from heaven

with overspreading terror, and shake the world with the sound of his anger. See that his mercy be not abused.

II. "The day of Christ's patience makes haste to an end." Every day of neglected grace hastens on the hour of his wrath and vengeance. Sinners waste their months and years in rebellion against his love, while he waits months and years to be gracious: But Christ is all-wise, and he knows the proper period of long-suffering, and the proper moment to let all his wrath and resentment loose on obstinate and unreclaimable sinners. Oh, may every one of our souls awake to faith and repentance, to religion and righteousness, to hope and salvation, before this day of our peace be finished, and gone for ever. Psalm ii. 12. *Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.* There was once a season when he saw the nation of the Jews, and the people of Jerusalem, wasting the proposals of his love; they let their day of mercy pass away unimproved, and he foretold their destruction with tears in his eyes. Luke xix. 41, 42. *He beheld the city, and wept over it;* alas, for the inhabitants, who would not be saved! He was then a messenger of salvation, and clothed with pity to sinners; but in the last great day of his wrath, there is no place for these tears of compassion, no room for pity or forgiveness.

III. "When we preach terror to obstinate sinners, we may preach Jesus Christ, as well as when we preach love and salvation, for he is the minister of his Father's government, both in vengeance and in mercy." The Lamb hath wrath, as well as grace, and he is to be feared, as well as to be trusted; and he must be represented under all the characters of dignity to which he is exalted, that, *knowing the terrors of the Lord,* as well as the compassion of the Saviour, *we may persuade* sinful *men* to accept of salvation and happiness; 2 *Cor.* v. 11.

DISCOURSE VI.

THE VAIN REFUGE OF SINNERS; OR, A MEDITATION ON THE ROCKS NEAR TUNBRIDGE-WELLS, 1729.

REV. vi. 15, 16, 17.

AND THE KINGS OF THE EARTH, AND THE GREAT MEN, AND THE RICH MEN, AND THE CHIEF CAPTAINS, AND THE MIGHTY MEN, AND EVERY BONDMAN, AND EVERY FREEMAN HID THEMSELVES IN THE DENS, AND IN THE ROCKS OF THE MOUNTAINS; AND SAID TO THE MOUNTAINS AND ROCKS, FALL ON US, AND HIDE US FROM THE FACE OF HIM THAT SITTETH ON THE THRONE, AND FROM THE WRATH OF THE LAMB: FOR THE GREAT DAY OF HIS WRATH IS COME, AND WHO SHALL BE ABLE TO STAND?

IN the former discourse on this text, we have taken a survey of these two persons, and their characters, God and the Lamb, whose united wrath spreads so terrible a scene through the world at the great judgment day; we have also enquired and found sufficient reasons why the anger and justice of God should be so severe against the sinful sons and daughters of men, who have wilfully broken his law, and refused the grace of his gospel, and why the indignation of the Son of God should be superadded to all the terrors of his Father's vengeance. We are come now to the third and last general head of discourse, and that is to consider, "How vain will all the refuges and hopes of sinners be found in that dreadful day, when God and the Lamb shall join to manifest their wrath and indignation against them?"

These hopes, and shifts, and refuges of rebellious and guilty creatures, are represented by a noble image and description in my text: *They shall call to the rocks and the mountains to fall upon them, and to cover them from the face of him that sits upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.* As this address to mountains and rocks appears to be but a vain hope in extreme distress, when a feeble and helpless criminal is pursued by a swift and mighty avenger, so vain and fruitless shall all the hopes of sinners be to escape the just indignation and sentence of their judge. In order to shew the vanity of all the refuges and shifts to which sinners shall betake themselves in that day, let us spread abroad this sacred description of them in a paraphrase under the following heads:

1. Let us consider the rocks and mountains as vast and mighty created beings, of huge figure and high appearance, whose aid is sought in the last extremity of distress; and what is this but calling upon creatures to help them against their Creator? What is it but flying to creatures to deliver and save them, when their offended God resolves to punish? A vain refuge indeed, when God, the almighty Maker of all things, and Jesus, his Son, by whom all things were made, shall agree to arise, and go forth against them in their robes of judgment, and with their artillery of vengeance! What created being dares interpose in that hour to shelter or defend a condemned criminal? What high and mighty

creature is able to afford the least security or protection. The princes of the earth, and the captains, the kings, and heroes, and conquerors, with all their millions of armed men, are not able to lift a hand for the defence of one sinner against the anger of God and the Lamb. They themselves shall quake and shiver at the tremendous sight, and they shall fly *into the holes of the rocks*, like mere cowards, and shall join their outcries with the poor and the slave, entreating the rocks and mountains to befriend them with shelter and safety.

Not the highest mountains, not the hardest or the strongest rocks, not the most exalted or most powerful persons, or things in nature can defend, when the God of nature resolves to destroy: When he, *who is higher than the highest*, and stronger than the strongest, shall pronounce destruction upon rebels, what creature can speak deliverance? The rocks and the mountains obey their Maker, they shiver in pieces at the word of his wrath, and will yield no relief to criminals: But man, rebellious man, disobeys his Maker, and calls to the rocks and mountains to protect him. Vain hope, O sinner! to make the most exalted creatures your friends, when God, the Creator, is your enemy. These inanimate things have never learned disobedience to their Maker, and, rather than screen a rebel from his deserved judgments, they will offer themselves as instruments of divine vengeance.

2. Rocks and mountains, in their clefts, and dens, and caverns, are sometimes considered as places of secresy and concealment. My text tells us, *that kings, and mighty men, the rich and the free men, as well as the poor and the slaves, hid themselves in dens, and in the rocks of the mountains.* They hoped there might be some secret corner, whose thick shadows and darkness were sufficient to hide them, where the Judge might not spy or find them out. Vain hope for sinners, to hide in the holes of the rocks, and the deepest caverns of the mountains, to escape the notice of that God, who is all eye and all ear, and present at once in every place of earth and heaven! Foolish expectation indeed, to avoid the notice of the Son of God, *whose eyes are as a flame of fire;* Rev. i. 14. and shoot through the earth, and its darkest caves!

Read the cxxxix. *Psalm*, O sinner! and then think if it be possible to flee from the eye of God, and to hide thyself in the clefts of the rock, where his hand shall not find thee.——He has already *beset thee behind and before, and his hand already compasses thee round about in all thy paths.* Darkness itself cannot cover thee: *The night shines as the day before him*, and scatters light round about the criminal that would hide himself from the wrath of God. Ask *Jeremy* the prophet, and he shall tell thee that *none can hide himself in secret places, where God shall not see him, the God who fills heaven and earth;* Jer. xxiii. 24. He shall hunt obstinate sinners from every mountain, and out of the holes of the rocks, *for his eyes are upon all their ways*, neither their persons nor their iniquities can be hid from him.

And as you can never conceal yourselves from the sight and notice of the Judge, so neither can you turn your eyes away from him: You must behold his face in vengeance, and endure the distressing sight. The rays of his Majesty, in the day of his wrath, shall strike through all the crannies of the darkest den, and pierce the deepest shade. *Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see, but they shall see, and be ashamed;* Isaiah xxvi. 11. And the face of the Lamb must be seen in all its unknown terrors. Rev. i. 7. *Behold, he comes in the clouds, and every eye shall see him:* The guilty creature, and the divine avenger, shall meet eye to eye, though the creature has hid himself under rocks and mountains.

3. These rocks and mountains are designed to represent not only concealment and darkness, by their holes and caverns, but they are known bulwarks of defence, and places of security and shelter, by reason of their strength and thickness. When the prophet would express the safety of the man who practises righteousness in a vicious age, *Isaiah* xxxiii. 16. he says, *He shall dwell on high, his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks.* These shall be a bulwark round him for his guard and safety. When sinners, therefore, flee to the mountains and to the rocks, they may be supposed to seek a thick covering, or a shield of defence, to secure them, where the strokes of divine anger shall not break through and reach them: They trust to the solid protection of the rocks and the strength of the mountains to guard them; but these, alas! can yield no shelter from the stroke of the arm of God. Should the rocks, O sinner! attempt to befriend thee, and surround thee with their thickest fortification, his wrath would cleave them asunder, and pierce thee to the soul with greater ease than thou canst break through a paper wall with the battering engines of war. Ask the prophet Nahum, who was acquainted with the majesty of God, and he shall tell thee, *how it throws down the mountain, and tears the rock in pieces: When his fury is poured out like fire, the mountains quake at him, the hills melt, the earth is burned at his presence, with all that dwell therein. He that has his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet*, what mountain can stand before his indignation, and where is the rock that can abide in the fierceness of his anger? *Nahum* i. 2—6. Were the whole globe of the earth one massy rock, and should it yawn to the very centre, to give thee a refuge and a hiding place, and then close again, and surround thee with its solid defence, yet when the Lord commands, the earth will obey the voice of him that made it; this solid earth would cleave again, and resign the guilty prisoner, and yield thee up to the sword of his justice. Wheresoever a God resolves to strike, safety and defence are impossible things. The sinner must suffer without remedy and without hope, who has provoked an Almighty God, and awakened the wrath of that Saviour *who can subdue all things to himself.*

4. Rocks and mountains falling upon us are instruments of sudden and overwhelming death. When sinners, therefore, call to the rocks and mountains to fall upon them, and cover them, they are supposed to endeavour to put an end to their own beings by some overwhelming destruction, that they may not live to feel and endure the resentments of an affronted God, and an abused Saviour. Though they are just raised to life, they would fain die again; but God, who calls the dead from their graves, will forbid the rocks and the mountains, and every creature, to lend sinners their aid to destroy themselves. Sinners, in that dreadful day, *shall seek death, but death shall flee from them.* Their natures are now made immortal, and the fall of rocks and mountains cannot crush them to death. They must live to sustain the weight of divine wrath, which is heavier than rocks and mountains.

The life which God hath now given to men in this mortal state may be given up again, or thrown away by the daring impiety of self-murder; and they may make many creatures instruments of their own destruction; but the life which the Son of God shall give them, when he calls them from the dead, is everlasting; they cannot resign their existence and immortality, they cannot part with it, nor can any creature take it from them. They would rather die than see God in his majesty, or the Lamb arrayed in his robes of judgment; but the wretches are immortalized to punishment, by the long abused majesty and

power of God: And they must live for ever to learn what it is to despise the authority of a God, and to abuse the grace of a Saviour. Their doom is *everlasting burnings: They have no rest day nor night, the smoke of their torment will ascend for ever and ever in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb;* Rev. xiv. 10, 11.

Thus have we considered those huge and bulky beings, the rocks and the mountains, in all their vast and mighty figures and appearances, with all their clefts, and dens, and caverns for shelter and concealment, with all their fortification and massy thickness for defence, and with all their power to crush and destroy mankind, and yet we find them utterly insufficient to hide, cover, or protect guilty creatures in that great day of the wrath of God and the Lamb.

Reflections on the foregoing discourse.

I. "How strangely do all the appearances of Christ to sinners, in the several seasons and dispensations of his grace, differ from that last great and solemn appearance, which, to them, will be a dispensation of final vengeance?" He visited the world in divine visions of old, even from the day of the sin of Adam, and it was to reveal mercy to sinful man, and he sometimes assumed the majesty of God, to let the world know he was not to be trifled with. He visited the earth at his incarnation: How lowly was his state! How full of grace his ministry! Yet he then gave notice of this day of vengeance, when he should appear in his own, and his Father's most awful glories.

He visits the nations now with the word of salvation, he appears in the glass of his gospel, and in the ordinances of his sanctuary, as a Saviour whose heart melts with love, and, in the language of his tenderest compassions, and of his dying groans, he invites sinners to be reconciled to an offended God: He appears as a Lamb made a sacrifice for sin, and as a minister of his Father's mercy, offering and distributing pardons to criminals. But when he visits the world as a final Judge, how solemn and illustrious will that appearance be? How terrible his countenance to all those who have refused to receive him as a Saviour? *Behold, he cometh in flaming fire, with ten thousand of his angels, to render vengeance to them that resisted his grace, and disobeyed the invitation of his gospel;* 2 Thess. i. 7.

Time was, when *the Father sent forth his Son, not to condemn the world, but that through him the world might have life;* John iii. 17. But the time is coming, when God shall send him arrayed with majesty and with righteous indignation, to condemn the rebellious world, and inflict upon them the pains of eternal death. Hast thou seen him, O my soul! in the discoveries of his mercy? Fly to him with all the wings of faith and love, with all the speed of desire and joy fly to him, receive his grace, and accept of his salvation, that, when the day of the wrath of the Lamb shall appear, thou mayest behold his countenance without terror and confusion.

II. "How very different will the thoughts of sinners be in that day from what they are at present? How different their wishes and their inclinations?" And that with regard to this one terror which my text describes, *viz.* that they shall address themselves to the rocks and mountains for shelter, and fly into the dens and caverns of the earth for concealment and safety. Let us survey this in a few particulars:

Sinners, whose looks were once lofty and disdainful, whose eyes were exalted in pride, their mouths set against the heavens, and their hearts haughty and full of scorn, they shall be humbled to the dust of the earth, they shall creep into the hiding-places of the moles and the bats, and thrust their heads into holes and caverns, and dens of

desolation, at the appearance of God, their Creator, in flaming fire, and the Son of God, their Judge; for he is the avenger of his own and his Father's injured honours.

Sinners, who were once fond of their idols and their sensual delights, who made idols to themselves of every agreeable creature, and gave it that place in their hearts which belongs only to God, *they shall be horribly confounded in that day, when God shall appear in his majesty, to shake the earth* to the centre, and to burn the surface of it with all its bravery. This is nobly described by the prophet Isaiah, chapter the second, from 10—21. *In that day shall a man cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made, each one for himself to worship, to the moles, and to the bats, to go into the clefts of the rock, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.*

Sinners, who once could not tell how to spend a day without gay company, those sons and daughters of mirth, who turned their midnights into noon, with the splendour of their lamps, and the rich and shining furniture of their palaces; those noisy companions of riot, who made the streets of the city resound with their midnight revels, they shall now fly to the solitary caverns of the rocks, and would be glad to dwell there in darkness and silence for ever, if they might but avoid the wrath of a provoked God, and the countenance of an abused Saviour. They would fain be shut up for ever from daylight, lest they should see the face of an almighty enemy, whose name and honour have been reproached in their songs of lewd jollity and profaneness.

Sinners, who once were fond of liberty in the wildest sense, and could not bear that any restraints should be laid upon their persons or their wishes, who never could endure the thought of a confinement to their closets for one half hour to converse with God, or with their own souls there, they now call aloud to the rocks and the mountains, to immure them round, as a refuge from the eye of their Judge. They were once perpetually roving abroad, and gadding through all the gay scenes of sensuality, in quest of new and flowery pleasures, but now they beg to be imprisoned for ever in the dens and caves of the earth; the deepest and most dismal caves are their most ardent wishes, that they might never see the countenance of their divine avenger, nor feel the weight of his hand.

Sinners, who heretofore thought themselves and their deeds of darkness secure enough from the eye of God, and from the strokes of his justice, while they revelled in their common habitations; those who, even under the open sky, could defy the Almighty, could laugh at his threatenings, and mock the prophecies of his vengeance, now they can find no caverns deep or dark enough to hide them from his sight; his lightnings penetrate the hardest rocks, and shine into the deepest solitudes: There is no screen or shelter thick and strong enough to stand between God and them, and to cover and shield them from his thunder. They call now to the mountains and the rocks to be an eternal screen; but the rocks and the mountains are deaf to their cry: then shall they remember, with unknown regret and anguish, those days of grace when Christ Jesus, who is now their Judge, offered himself to become a screen to them, and a defence from the anger of God, their Creator: But they rejected this offered grace. He would have been the rock of their safety, where they should have found refuge from the fiery threatenings of the broken law, and the majesty of an offended God. The Father himself hath appointed him for this kind office to repenting sinners; and, perhaps, he gave Moses a type or emblem of it, when he commanded himself *to hide in the clefts of the rock,* to secure

him from destruction, while the burning blaze of his glory passed by; *Exodus* xxxiii. 22. And Isaiah the prophet had foretold, that this Jesus *should be as the shadow of a great rock;* Isaiah xxxii. 2. to shelter them from the beams of the wrath of God; but they refused this blessing, they renounced this refuge; and now they find there is no other rock sufficient to become a shelter from the stroke of his almighty arm, or a sufficient shadow from the burning vengeance.

Sinners, who once over-rated their flesh and blood, and loved it with infinite fondness, who treated their fleshly appetites with excessive nicety and elegance, and affected a humorous delicacy in every thing round about them, they would now gladly creep into the mouldy caverns of the rocks, they would be glad to hide, and defile themselves in the dark and noisome grottos of the earth, and squeeze their bodies into the rough and narrow clefts, to shield themselves from the indignation of him that sits upon the throne, and of the Lamb.

Those who once were so tender of this mortal life and limbs, and could not think of bearing the least hardship for the sake of virtue and piety, are now wishing to have those delicate limbs of theirs crushed by the fall of rocks and mountains: They wish earnestly to have their lives and their souls destroyed for ever, and their whole natures buried in desolation and death, if they might but avoid the eternal agonies and torments that are prepared for them. Now they long for caverns and graves to hide them for ever from the justice of God, whose authority they have despised, and from the wrath of a Saviour, whose mercy they have impiously renounced.

" Look forward, O my soul, to this awful and dreadful hour; survey this tremendous scene of confusion, when sinners shall run counter to all their former principles and wishes, and pass a quite different judgment upon their sinful delights, from what they were wont to do in the days of this life of vanity. Learn, O my soul, to judge of things more agreeable to the appearances of that day: Never canst thou set the flattering pleasures of sense, and the joys of sin, in a truer and juster view, than in the light of this glorious and tremendous judgment."

III. " How great and dreadful must the distress of creatures be, when they cannot bear to see the face of God, their Creator!" How terrible must be the circumstances of the sons of men, when they cannot endure to see the face of the Son of God, but would fain hide themselves from the sight under rocks and mountains! How wretched must their state be, who avoid the face of the blessed God with horror, which the holy angels ever behold with most intense delight, and which the saints rejoice in as their highest happiness! It is their heaven to see God, and behold the glory of his Son Jesus; *Matt.* v. 8. *John* xvii. 24. But this is the very hell of sinners in that dismal hour, and will fill their souls with such inexpressible anguish, that they call to the rocks and mountains to hide them from the sight. Dreadful and deplorable is their case indeed, who cannot endure to see the countenance of Jesus, the Son of God, Jesus, the Saviour of men, the copy of the Father's glory, and the image of his beauty and love. They cannot bear to see that Jesus, who is the *chiefest of ten thousands, and altogether lovely;* they fly from that blessed countenance, which is the ornament and the joy of all the holy and happy creation: That blessed countenance is become the terror and confusion of impenitent and guilty rebels.

" And what shall I do, if I should be found among this criminal number in that great day? If I look at the wisdom and the righteousness of God, these will reflect the

keenest rays of horror and anguish upon my soul; for it is that wisdom and that righteousness that have joined to prepare the salvation which I have rejected, and therefore, now that wise and righteous God seeth it proper and necessary to punish me with everlasting sorrows. If I look at the power of God, it is a dreadful sight: Eternal and almighty power, that can break through rocks and mountains to inflict vengeance upon the guilty, and stands engaged by his honour to break my rebellious spirit with unknown torments. If I look at his goodness or his love, it is love and goodness that I have despised and abused, and it is now changed into divine fury. If I look at the face of Jesus, and find there the correspondent features of his Father, I shall then hate to see it—for this very reason, because it bears his Father's image, who is so terrible to my thoughts. I shall neither be able to bear the sight of God, or of his fairest copy, that is, Jesus his Son, because I am so shamefully unlike them both, and besides I have affronted their majesty, and despised their mercy.

" How painful and smarting will be the reflection of my heart in that day, when I shall remember that Jesus called out to me from heaven by the messengers of his grace, and said, *Behold me, behold me, look unto me from the ends of the earth, and be saved;* Isaiah xlv. 22. But now he is armed with a commission of vengeance, and he strikes terror and exquisite pain into my soul with every frown, so that I shall wish to be for ever hid from the face of the Lamb, *for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to endure* this wrath, to stand before his thunder, or bear the lightning of this day? Alas! how miserable must I be, by an everlasting necessity, if I cannot bear the countenance of God and Christ, which is the spring of unchangeable happiness to all the saints and the blessed angels? Oh may I timely secure the love of my God, and gain an interest in the favour and salvation of the blessed Jesus! Here, O Lord, at thy foot I lay down all the weapons of my former rebellions; I implore thy love through the interest of thy Son, the great Mediator: Let me see the light of thy countenance, and the smiles of thy face: Let me see a reconciled God, and let him tell me that my sins are all forgiven; then shall I not be afraid to meet the countenance of him *that sits upon the throne, or the Lamb*, when Christ shall return from heaven to punish the impenitent rebels against divine grace."

IV. " How hopeless, as well as distressed, is the case of sinners in that day, when they are driven to this last extremity, to seek help from the rocks and the mountains?" It is the last, but the fruitless refuge of a frighted and perishing creature: The rocks and mountains refuse to help them; they will not crush to death those wretches, whom the justice of God has doomed to a painful immortality, nor will they conceal or shelter those obstinate rebels, whom the Son of God has raised out of their graves, to be exposed to public shame and punishment. Those high and hollow rocks, those dismal dens and caverns, dark as midnight, those deep and gloomy retreats of melancholy and sorrow, which they shunned with utmost aversion, and could hardly bear to think of them without horror here on earth, are now become their only retreat and shelter; but it is a very vain and hopeless one.

" When I see such awful appearances in nature, huge and lofty rocks hanging over my head, and at every step of my approach they seem to nod upon me with overwhelming ruin, when my curiosity searches far into their hollow clefts, their dark and deep caverns of solitude and desolation, methinks while I stand amongst them, I can hardly think myself in safety, and, at best, they give a sort of solemn and dreadful delight: Let me

improve the scene to religious purposes, and raise a divine meditation. Am I one of those wretches who shall call to these huge impending rocks to fall upon me? Am I that guilty and miserable creature, who shall entreat these *mountains to cover me from him that sits on the throne, and the Lamb:* Am I prepared to meet the countenance of the blessed Jesus, the Judge in that day? Have I such an acquaintance with *the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,* such a holy faith in his mediation, such a sincere love to him, and such an unfeigned repentance of all my sins, that I can look upon him as my friend and my refuge, and a friend infinitely better than rocks and mountains, for he not only screens me from the divine anger, but introduces me into the Father's love, and places me in his blissful presence for ever?

V. "What hideous and everlasting mischief is contained in the nature of sin, especially sin against the gospel of Christ, against the methods of grace, and the offers of salvation, which exposes creatures to such extreme distress? The fairest and the most flattering iniquity, what beautiful colours soever it may put on in the hour of temptation, yet it carries all this hidden mischief and terror in the bosom of it, for it frights the creature from the sight of his Creator and his Saviour, and makes him fly to every vain refuge. Adam and Eve, the parents of our race, when they lost their innocence, and became criminals, fled from the presence of God, whom they conversed with before in holy friendship, Gen. iii. 8. *They hid themselves among the trees of paradise,* and the thickest shadows of the garden; but the eye and the voice of God reached them there: The curse found them out, though that was a curse allayed with the promised blessing of a Saviour. Guilt will work in the conscience, and tell us that God is angry, and the next thought is, "Where shall I hide myself from an angry God?" But when the mercy of God has taught us where we may hide ourselves, even under the shadow of the cross of his Son, and we refuse to make him our refuge, there remains nothing but a final horror of soul, and a hopeless address to rocks and mountains to hide us from an offended God, and a provoked Saviour.

"Whensoever, O my soul, thou shalt find or feel some flattering iniquity alluring thy senses, making court to thy heart, and ready to gain upon thy inward wishes, remember the distress and terror of heart that sinners must undergo in the great and terrible day of the Lord. Think of the rocks and mountains which they vainly call upon to befriend them, to shield them from the vengeance of that almighty arm, which is provoked by sin to make his creatures miserable. Remember, O my soul, and fear; remember, and resist the vile temptation, and stand afar off from that practice which will make thee afraid to see the face of God."

VI. "Of what infinite importance is it then to sinners to gain an humble acquaintance and friendship with *the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,* that we may be able with comfort to behold the face of him that sits on the throne in that day." Which of us can say, "I am not a sinner, I am not guilty before God?" And which of us then has the courage and hardiness to declare, "I have no need of a Saviour?" And is there any one amongst us who hath not yet fled for refuge to Jesus, our only and sufficient hope? There is a protection provided against a provoked God, but there is none against a neglected and abused Saviour; I mean where this neglect and abuse is final and unrepented. "Oh, how solicitous should every soul be in a matter of this divine moment, his everlasting importance! What words of compassion shall we use, what words of awakening terror, to put sinners in mind of their extreme danger, if they neglect the only

security which the gospel has appointed? What language of fear and importunity shall we make use of, to hasten you, O sinners, to the acquaintance, the faith, and the love of Jesus the Saviour, that you may behold his face, and the face of the Father, with serenity and joy in the last day? Give yourselves up to him then without further delay, as your teacher, your high-priest, your reconciler, your Lord and king. His blessed offices are the only chambers of protection, when God shall arise to burn the world, and to avenge himself on his enemies that will not be reconciled."

VII. Let us take occasion from my text also to meditate on the "happy circumstances of true christians in that day of terror." Behold, the Judge appears, he cometh in the clouds, surrounded with armies of avenging angels, the ministers of his indignation; he rideth on a chariot of flaming fire, the earth, with all its mountains, *melt like wax at the presence of the Lord*, the fields and the forests become one spacious blaze, the sea grows dry, and forsakes its shores, and rivers flee away at his lightning; the rocks are broken and shivered at the appearance of his majesty, the tombs are thrown open, and with terrible dismay shall the graves give up their dead; the pyramids of brick and stone moulder and sink into dust, the sepulchres of brass and marble yield up their royal prisoners, and all the captives of death awake, and start into life, at the voice of the Son of God. Amidst all these scenes of surprise and horror, with how serene a countenance, and how peaceful a soul, do the saints awake from their beds of earth? Calm and serene, among all these confusions, they arise from their long slumber, and go to meet their returning Saviour and their friend. They have seen him in the glass of his gospel, submitted to his laws, and rejoiced in his grace, and they now delight to *see him face to face* in his glory. They have seen him vested with his commission of mercy, they have heard and received his message of goodness and love, and they cannot but rejoice to see him coming to fulfil his last promises. They have cheerfully subjected themselves to his government here on earth, they have followed him in paths of holiness through the wilderness of this world, and what remains but that they be publicly acknowledged by Jesus, the Judge of all, and follow him up to the place of blessedness which he hath prepared for them.

Perhaps some of these holy ones, in the days of the flesh, were banished from the cities and the societies of men for the sake of Christ, they were driven out from their native towns, and forced to seek a shelter in solitary *dens and caves, among rocks and mountains, to wander through deserts in sheep-skins and goat-skins, destitute, afflicted, tormented;* Heb. xi. 31. they made the clefts of the rock, and caverns of the earth, their refuge from the face of their cruel persecutors: The mountains and rocks sheltered them from the wrath of princes, and the dark grottos of the earth, and the dens of wild beasts, concealed them from the rage of men, *from the sword of the mighty;* but now the scene is gloriously changed; the martyrs and holy confessors awaking from their graves, exult and triumph in the smiles of their Judge, and receive public honours before the whole creation of God. They behold the infinite consternation of haughty tyrants and persecuting princes, of proud generals and bloody captains in that day: They hear them "*call to rocks and mountains, to hide them from the face of him that sits upon the throne, and the Lamb.*" The authority and regal honour of the emperors of the earth hath long slept in the dust, but it is lost there for ever; their glory shall not awake nor arise with them: Behold the mighty sinners, who have been the enemies of Christ, or negligent of his sal-

vation, how they creep affrighted out of their shattered marbles, and leave all that pomp and pride of death in ruins, to appear before God with shame and everlasting contempt. The men of arms, the captains and sons of valour, whose *swords lay under their heads*, with their trophies and titles spread around them, shall raise their heads up from the dust with utmost affright and anguish of spirit: Their courage fails them before the face of Jesus, the Lord and Judge of the whole creation. They would fly to the common refuge of slaves, they shrink into the holes of the rocks, and call to the mountains to screen and protect them: *And every bondman and every freeman*, who have not known nor loved God and Christ, are plunged into extremest distress; but the humble christian is serene and joyful, and lifts up his head with courage and delight, in the midst of these scenes of astonishment and dismay.

"He is come, he is come, saith the saint, even that Lord Jesus, whom I have seen, whom I have known, and loved in the days of my mortal life, whom I have long waited for in the dust of death; he is come to reward all my labours, to wipe away all my sorrows, to finish my faith, and turn it into sight, to fulfil all my hopes, and his own promises; he is come to deliver me for ever from all my enemies, and to bear me to the place which he has prepared for those that love him, and long for his appearance.

"O blessed be the God of grace, who hath convinced me of the sins of my nature, and the sins of my life in the days of my flesh; who hath discovered to me the danger of a guilty and sinful state, hath shewn me the commission of mercy in the hands of his Son, hath pointed me to *the Lamb of God*, who was offered as a sacrifice *to take away the sins of men*, and hath inclined me to receive him in all his divine characters and offices, and to follow *the captain of my salvation* through all the labours and dangers of life. I have trusted in him, I have loved him, I have endeavoured, though under many frailties, to honour and obey him, and I can now behold his face without terror: While *the mighty men of the earth* tremble with amazement, and *call to the rocks and mountains to hide them from his face*, I rejoice to see him in his robes of judgment, for he is come to pronounce me righteous in the face of men and angels, to declare me a good and faithful servant before the whole creation, to set the crown of victory on my head, to take me to heaven with him, *that where he is, I may be also, to behold his glory;* John xvii. 24. and to partake for ever of the blessings of his love." *Amen.*

DISCOURSE VII.

NO NIGHT IN HEAVEN.

REV. XXI. 25.

FOR THERE SHALL BE NO NIGHT THERE.

LENGTH of night and overspreading darkness in the winter season, carries so many inconveniences with it that it is generally esteemed a most uncomfortable part of our time. Though night and day necessarily succeed each other all the year, by the wise appointment of God in the course of nature, by means of the revolution of the heavenly bodies, or rather of this earthly globe, yet the night season is neither so delightful, nor so useful a part of life, as the duration of daylight. It is the voice of all nature as well as the word of Solomon, *Light is sweet, and a pleasant thing to enjoy the sunbeams;* Eccles. xi. 7. Light gives a glory and beauty to every thing that is visible, and shews the face of nature in its most agreeable colours; but night, as it covers all the visible world with one dark and undistinguishing veil, is less pleasing to all the animal parts of the creation. Therefore as hell, and the place of punishment, is called *utter darkness* in scripture, so heaven is represented as a mansion of glory, as *the inheritance of the saints in light;* Col. i. 12. And this light is constant, without interruption, and everlasting, or without end. So my text expresses it, *there shall be no night there.*

Let it be observed, that in the language of the holy writers, light is often ascribed to intellectual beings, and is used as a metaphor to imply knowledge and holiness and joy. Knowledge is the beauty and excellency of the mind, holiness as the best regulation of the will, and joy as the harmony of our best affections in the possession of what we love: And in opposition to these, ignorance, iniquity, and sorrow, are represented by the metaphor of darkness. Then we are in darkness, in a spiritual sense, when the understanding is beclouded or led into mistake, or when the will is perverted or turned away from God and holiness, or when the most uncomfortable affections prevail in the soul. I might cite particular texts of scripture to exemplify all this. And when it is said, *there shall be no night in heaven,* it may be very well applied in the spiritual sense; there shall be no errors or mistakes amongst the blessed, no such ignorance as to lead them astray, or to make them uneasy; the will shall never be turned aside from its pursuit of holiness and obedience to God; nor shall the affections ever be ruffled with any thing that may administer grief and pain. Clear and unerring knowledge, unspotted holiness, and everlasting joy shall be the portion of all the inhabitants of the upper world. These are more common subjects of discourse.

But I choose rather at present to consider this word NIGHT, in its literal sense, and shall endeavour to represent part of the blessedness of the heavenly state under this special description of it. *There is no night there.*

Now in order to pursue this design, let us take a brief survey of the several evils or

inconveniences which attend the night or the season of darkness here on earth, and shew how far the heavenly world is removed and free from all manner of inconvenience of this kind.

1. Though night be the season of sleep, for the relief of nature and for our refreshment after the labours of the day, yet it is a certain sign of the weakness and weariness of nature, when it wants such refreshments and such dark seasons of relief. But there is no night in heaven. "Say, O ye inhabitants of that vital world, are ye ever weary? Do your natures know any such weakness? Or are your holy labours of such a kind, as to expose you to fatigue, or to tire your spirits?" "The blessed above *mount up* towards God *as on eagles' wings, they run* at the command of God, *and are not weary, they walk* on the hills of paradise, *and never faint*," as the prophet Isaiah expresses a vigorous and pleasurable state, chapter xl. 31.

There are no such animal bodies in heaven, whose natural springs of action can be exhausted or weakened by the business of the day: There is no flesh and blood there to complain of weariness, and to want rest. O blessed state, where our faculties shall be so happily suited to our work, that we shall never feel ourselves weary of it, nor fatigued by it. And as there is no weariness, so there is no sleeping there. Sleep was not made for the heavenly state. Can the spirits of the just ever sleep under the full blaze of divine glory, under the incessant communications of divine love, under the perpetual influences of the grace of God the Father, and of Jesus the Saviour, and amidst the inviting confluence of every spring of blessedness.

2. Another inconvenience of night, near a-kin to the former, is, that business is interrupted by it, partly for want of light to perform it as well as for want of strength and spirits to pursue it. This is constantly visible in the successions of labour and repose here on earth; and the darkness of the night is appointed to interrupt the course of labour and the business of the day, that nature may be recruited. But the business of heaven is never interrupted; there is everlasting light and everlasting strength. "Say, ye blessed spirits on high, who join in the services which are performed for God and the Lamb there; ye who unite all your powers in the worship and homage that is paid to the Father, and to the Son; ye that mingle in all the joyful conversation of that divine and holy assembly, say, is there found any useless hour there; Do your devotions, your duties and your joys, ever suffer such an entire interruption of rest and silence, as the season of darkness on earth necessarily creates amongst the inhabitants of our world!"

The living creatures* which are represented by John the apostle in *Rev.* iv. 6—8. whether they signify saints or angels, yet they were *full of eyes* that never slumber; *they rest not day nor night*, this is spoken in the language of mortals, to signify that they are never interrupted by any change of seasons, or intervening darkness in the honours they pay to God: They are described as ever saying, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.* And the same sort of expression is used concerning the saints in heaven; *Rev.* vii. 14, 15. *They who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple;* that is, they constantly serve or worship him in his holy temple in heaven. Perhaps the different orders and ranks of them, in a continual succession, are ever doing some honours to God. As there is no

*The word ζῶα, which is translated "beasts," signifies only "animals," or "living creatures," and does not carry with it so mean and so disagreeable an idea as the word "beasts" in English.

night there, so there is no cessation of their services, their worship, and their holy exercises, in one form or another, throughout the duration of their being.

Our pleasures here on earth are short-lived: If they are intense, nature cannot bear them long, any more than constant business and labour: And if our labours and our pleasures should happily join and mingle here on earth, which is not always the case, yet night compels us to break off the pleasing labour, and we must rest from the most delightful business. Happy is that region on high, where business and pleasure are for ever the same among all the inhabitants of it, and there is no pause or entire cessation of the one or the other. "Tell me, ye warm and lively christians, when your hearts are sweetly and joyfully engaged in the worship of God, in holy conversation, or in any pious services here on earth, how often you have been forced to break off these celestial entertainments by the returning night. But in the heavenly state there is everlasting active service with everlasting delight and satisfaction." In that blessed world there can be no idleness, no inactivity, no trifling intervals to pass away time, no vacant or empty spaces in eternal life. Who can be idle under the immediate eye of God? Who can trifle in the presence of Christ? Who can neglect the pleasurable work of heaven under the sweet influences of the present Deity, and under the smiles of his countenance, who approves all their work and worship.

3. As in our present world, the hours of night are inactive if we sleep, so they seem long and tedious when our eyes are wakeful, and sleep flies from us. Perhaps we hear the clock strike one hour after another, with wearisome longings for the next succeeding hour: We wish the dark season at an end, and we long for the approach of morning, we grow impatient for the dawning of the day. But in heaven, "ye spirits who have dwelt longest there, can ye remember one tiresome or tedious hour, through all the years of your residence in that country? Is there not eternal wakefulness among all the blessed? Can any of you ever indulge a slumber? Can you sleep in heaven? Can you want it, or wish for it? No, for that world is all vital, and sprightly for ever." When we leave this flesh and blood, farewell to all the tedious measures of time, farewell tiresome darkness; our whole remaining duration is life and light, vital activity and vigour, attended with everlasting holiness and joy.

4. While we are here on earth the darkness of the night often exposes us to the danger of losing our way, of wandering into confusion, or falling into mischief. When the sunbeams have withdrawn their light, and midnight clouds overspread the heaven, we cannot see our path before us, we cannot pursue our proper course, nor secure ourselves from stumbling. How many travellers have been betrayed by the thick shadows of the night into mistaken ways or pathless deserts, into endless mazes among thorns and briars, into bogs and pits, and precipices, into sudden destruction and death? But there are no dangers of this kind in the heavenly world: All the regions of paradise are for ever illuminated by the glory of God? The light of his countenance shines upon every step that we shall take, and brightens all our way. We shall walk in the light of God, and under the blessed beams of *the Sun of righteousness*, and we are secured for ever against wandering, and against every danger of tripping or falling in our course. *Our feet may stumble on the dark mountains here below;* Jer. xiii. 16. but there is no stumbling-block on the hills of paradise, nor can we go astray from our God or our duty. The paths of that country are all pleasure, and everliving daylight shines upon them without end. Happy beings, who dwell or travel there!

5. In the night we are exposed here on earth to the violence and plunder of wicked men, whether we are abroad or at home. There is scarce any safety now a-days to those who travel in the night, and even in our own habitations there is frequent fear and surprise. At that season the sons of mischief *dig through houses in the dark which they had marked for themselves in the daytime:* They lurk in corners to seize the innocent, and to rob him of his possessions. But in the heavenly world, there is no dark hour; there is nothing that can encourage such mischievous designs, nor are any of the sons of violence or the malicious powers of darkness suffered to have an abode or refuge in that country. No surprise nor fear belongs to the inhabitants of those regions. Happy souls, who spend all their life in the light of the countenance of God, and are for ever secure from the plots and mischievous devices of the wicked!

While we dwell here below amongst the changing seasons of light and darkness, what daily care is taken to shut the doors of our dwellings against the men of mischief? What solicitude in a time of war to keep the gates of our towns and cities well secured against all invasion of enemies? Cantic. iii. 8. *Every man with his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night.* But, in that blessed world, there is no need of such defences; no such guardian cares to secure the inhabitants. *The gates of that city shall not be shut by day, and there is no night there.* There shines perpetual daylight, and the gates are ever open to receive new-comers from our world, or for the conveyance of orders and messages to and fro from the throne, through all the dominions of God and of the Lamb. Blessed are the inhabitants of that country, where there are no dangers arising from any of the wicked powers of darkness, nor any dark minute to favour their plots of mischief.

6. "The time of night and darkness is the time of the concealment of secret sins." Shameful iniquities are then practised amongst men, because the darkness is a cover to them. *The eye of the adulterer watches for the twilight, saying, no eye shall see me;* Job xxiv. 15. *In the black and dark night* he hopes for concealment as well as the thief and the murderer, and *they that are drunken, are drunken in the night;*" 1 Thess. v. 7. The hours of darkness are a temptation to these iniquities, and the shadows of the evening are a veil to cover them from the sight of men: They find a screen behind the curtains of the night, and a refuge in thick darkness. But in the heavenly world, there is no temptation to such iniquities, no defilement can gain an entrance there, nor could it find any veil or covering. The regions of light, and peace, and holy love, are never violated with such scenes of villany and guilt. No secret sins can be committed there, nor can they hope for any screen to defend them from the eye of God, and the Lamb, whose eyes are like a flame of fire. The light of God shines round every creature in that country, and there is not a saint or angel there, that desires a covering from the sight of God, nor would accept of a veil or screen to interpose between him and the lovely glories of divine holiness and grace. To behold God, and to live under the blessings of his eye is their everlasting and chosen joy. O that our world were more like it!

7. When the night returns upon us here on earth, the pleasures of sight vanish and are lost. Knowledge is shut out at one entrance, in a great degree, and one of our senses is withheld from the spreading beauties and glories of this lower creation, almost as though we were deprived of it, and were grown blind for a season.

It is true, the God of nature has appointed the moon and stars to relieve the darkness, at some seasons, that when the sun is withdrawn, half the world at those hours may not be in confusion: And by the inventions of men, we are furnished with lamps and

candles to relieve our darkness within doors: But if we stir abroad in the black and dark night, instead of the various and delightful scenes of the creation of God, in the skies and the fields, we are presented with a universal blank of nature, and one of the great entertainments and satisfactions of this life is quite taken away from us. But in heaven, the glories of that world are for ever in view: The beauteous scenes and prospects of the hills of paradise are never hidden: We shall there continually behold a rich variety of *things which eye hath not seen on earth, which ear hath not heard, and which the heart of man hath not conceived;* 1 Cor. ii. 9. Say, ye souls in paradise, ye inhabitants of that glorious world, is there any loss of pleasure by your absence from those works of God which are visible here on earth, while you are for ever entertained with those brighter works of God in the upper world? While every corner of that country is enlightened by the glory of God himself, and while the Son of God, with all his beams of grace, shines for ever upon it?

8. It is another unpleasing circumstance of the night season, that it is the coldest part of time. When the sun is sunk below the earth and its beams are hidden from us, its kindly and vital heat, as well as its light, are removed from one side of the globe; and this gives a sensible uneasiness in the hours of midnight to those who are not well provided with warm accommodations. And I might add also, it is too often night with us in a spiritual sense, while we dwell here on earth: Our hearts are cold as well as dark: How seldom do we feel that fervency of spirit in religious duties which God requires? How cool is our love to the greatest and the best of beings? How languid and indifferent are our affections to the Son of God, *the chiefest of ten thousand and altogether lovely?* And how much doth the devotion of our souls want its proper ardour and vivacity.

But when the soul is arrived at heaven, we shall be all warm and fervent in our divine and delightful work. As there shall be nothing painful to the senses in that blessed climate, so there shall not be one cold heart there, nor so much as one luke-warm worshipper; for we shall live under the immediate rays of God, who formed the light, and under the kindest influences of Jesus, *the sun of righteousness.* We shall be made *like his angels,* who are most active *spirits, and his ministers,* who are *flames of fire;* Psalm civ. 4. Nor shall any dulness or indifferency hang upon our sanctified powers and passions: They shall be all warm and vigorous in their exercise, amidst the holy enjoyments of that country.

In the ninth and last place, as night is the season appointed for sleep, so it becomes a constant periodical emblem of death, as it returns every evening. Sleep and midnight, as I have shewn before, are no seasons of labour or activity, nor of delight in the visible things of this world: It is a dark and stupid scene wherein we behold nothing with truth, though we are sometimes deceived and deluded by dreaming visions and vanities: Night and the slumbers of it are a sort of shorter death and burial, interposed between the several daily scenes and transactions of human life. But in heaven, as there is no sleeping there is no dying, nor is there any thing there that looks like death. Sleep, the image or emblem of death, is for ever banished from that world. All is vital activity there: Every power is immortal, and every thing that dwells there is for ever alive. There can be no death, nor the image of it where the everliving God dwells, and shines with his kindest beams: His presence maintains perpetual vitality in every soul, and keeps the new creature in its youth and vigour for ever. The saints shall never have reason to mourn over their withering graces, languid virtues or dying comforts; nor shall they ever

complain of drowsy faculties or inactive powers, where God and the Lamb are for ever present in the midst of them. Shall I invite your thoughts to dwell a little upon this subject?

Here this Discourse may be divided.

Shall we make a more particular inquiry, whence it comes to pass that there is no night nor darkness in the heavenly city? We are told a little before the words of my text, that *the glory of God enlightens it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. There is no need of the sun by day, or of the moon by night;* there is no need of any such change of seasons as day and night in the upper regions, nor any such alternate enlighteners of a dark world, as God has placed in our firmament, or in this visible sky. The inheritance of the saints in light is sufficiently irradiated by God himself, who at his first call made the light to spring up out of darkness over a wide chaos of confusion, before the sun and moon appeared; and the beams of divine light, grace and glory, are communicated from God, the original fountain of it, by the Lamb, to all the inhabitants of the heavenly country. It was by Jesus, his Son that God made the light at first, and by him he conveys it to all the happy worlds.

There is no doubt of this in the present heaven of saints departed from flesh, who are ascended to *the spirits of the just made perfect.* It is one of their privileges that they go to dwell not only where they see the face of God, but where they behold the glory of Christ, and converse with *Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant;* Heb. xii. 23, 24. and are "for ever with the Lord who redeemed them." 2 *Cor.* v. 8. Since his mediatorial kingdom and offices are not yet finished in the present heaven of separate souls, we may depend on this blessedness to be communicated through Christ, the Lamb of God, and all the spiritual enjoyments and felicities which are represented under the metaphor of light, are conveyed to them through Jesus the Mediator.

The sun, in the natural world, is a bright emblem of divinity, or the godhead; for it is the spring of all light and heat and life to the creation. It is by the influences of the sun that herbs, plants, and animals are produced in their proper seasons, and in all their various beauties, and they are all refreshed and supported by it. Now if we should suppose this vast globe of fire, which we call the sun, to be inclosed in a huge hollow sphere of chrystal, which should attemper its rays like a transparent veil, and give milder and gentler influences to the burning beams of it, and yet transmit every desirable and useful portion of light or heat, this would be a happy emblem of the man *Christ Jesus, in whom dwells all the fulness of the godhead bodily;* Col. ii. 9. It is the Lamb of God, who in a mild and gracious manner, conveys the blessings originally derived from God his Father, to all the saints. We partake of them in our measure in this lower world, among his churches here on earth; but it is with a nobler influence, and in a more sublime degree, the blessings of paradise are diffused through all the mansions of glory by this illustrious medium of conveyance, Jesus, the Son of God; and there can be no night nor coldness, death nor darkness in this happy state of separate souls.

When the bodies of the saints shall be raised again, and re-united to their proper spirits, when they shall ascend to the place of their final heaven and supreme happiness, we know not what manner of bodies they shall be, what sort of senses they shall be furnished with, nor how many powers of conversing with the corporeal world shall be bestowed upon them. Whether they shall have such organs of sensation as eyes and

ears, and stand in need of such light as we derive from the sun or moon, is not absolutely certain. The scripture tells us, it shall not be a body of flesh and blood: These are not materials refined enough for the heavenly state; *that which is corruptible cannot inherit in corruption;* 1 Cor. xv. 50. But this we may be assured of, that whatsoever inlets of knowledge, whatever avenues of pleasure, whatever delightful sensations are necessary to make the inhabitants of that world happy, they shall be all united in that spiritual body, which God will prepare for the new-raised saints. If eyes and ears shall belong to that glorified body, those sensitive powers shall be nobly enlarged and made more delightfully susceptive of richer shares of knowledge and joy.

Or, what if we shall have that body furnished with such unknown mediums or organs of sensation, as shall make light and sound such as we here partake of unnecessary to us? These organs shall certainly be such as shall transcend all the advantages that we receive in this present state, from sounds or sunbeams. There shall be no disconsolate darkness, nor any tiresome silence there. There shall be no night to interrupt the business, or the pleasures of that everlasting day. Or what if the whole body shall be endued all over with the senses of seeing and hearing? What if these sort of sensations shall be diffused throughout all that immortal body, as feeling is diffused through all our present mortal flesh? What if God himself shall in a more illustrious manner irradiate all the powers of the body and spirit, and communicate the light of knowledge, holiness and joy, in a superior manner to what we can now conceive or imagine? This is certain, that darkness in every sense, with all the inconveniences and unhappy consequences of it, is and must be for ever banished from the heavenly state. There is no night there.

When our Lord Jesus Christ shall have given up his mediatorial kingdom to the Father, and have presented all his saints spotless and without blemish before his throne, it is hard for us mortals in the present state to say, how far he shall be the everlasting medium of the communication of divine blessings to the happy inhabitants on high. Yet when we consider that the saints and angels and the whole happy creation are gathered together in him, as their head,* it is certain they shall all be accounted in some sense his members; and it is highly probable he, as their head, shall be for ever active in communicating and diffusing the unknown blessings of that world, amongst all the inhabitants of it, who are gathered and united in him.

I come in the last place to make a few remarks upon the foregoing discourse, and in order to render them more effectual for our spiritual advantage, I shall consider the words of my text, *there shall be no night there,* in their metaphorical or spiritual meaning as well as in their literal sense. There is no night of ignorance or error in the mind, no night of guilt or of sorrow in the soul: But the blessed above shall dwell surrounded with the light of divine knowledge, they shall walk in the light of holiness, and they shall be for ever filled with the light of consolation and joy, as I have explained it at the beginning of this discourse.

The first remark then is this: "When heaven, earth, and hell, are compared together with relation to light and darkness, or night and day," we then see them in their proper distinctions and aspects. Every thing is set in its most distinguishing situation and

* The Greek word ἀνακεφαλαιόω, used in *Eph.* i. 10. favours this meaning, and perhaps *Col.* i. 20. includes the same thing.

appearance, when it is compared with things which are most opposite. The earth on which we dwell, during this state of trial, has neither all day nor all night belonging to it, but sometimes light appears and again darkness, whether in a natural or a spiritual sense.

Though there be long seasons of darkness in the winter, and darkness in the summer also, in its constant returns, divides one day from another, yet the God of nature hath given us a larger portion of light than there is of darkness throughout the whole globe of the earth: And this benefit we receive by the remaining beams of the sun after its setting, and by the assistance of the moon and the stars of heaven. Blessed be God for the moon and stars, as well as for the sunbeams and the brightness of noon. Blessed be God for all the lights of nature, but we still bless him more for the light of the gospel, and for any rays from heaven, any beams of the sun of righteousness, which diffuse in lower measures, knowledge and holiness and comfort, among the inhabitants of this our world. God is here manifesting his love and grace in such proportions as he thinks proper. Some beams of the heavenly world break out upon us here in this dark region. God the spring of all our light, and the Lamb of God by his Spirit, communicates sufficient light to us, to guide us on in our way to that heavenly country.

In hell there is all night and darkness, thick darkness in every sense, for the God of glory is absent there as to any manifestations of his face and favour. And therefore it is often called *outer darkness, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.* There is no holiness, there is no comfort, there are no benefits of the creation, no blessings of grace; all are forfeited and gone for ever. It is everlasting night and *blackness of darkness* in that world: Horror of soul without a beam of refreshment from the face of God, or the Lamb for ever. The devils are now *reserved in everlasting chains under darkness to the judgment of the great day;* Jude, verse 6. But then their confinement shall be closer, and their darkness, guilt and sorrow shall be more overwhelming. Is it lawful for me in this place to mention the description which Milton, our English poet, gives of their wretched habitation?

"A dungeon horrible on all sides round
As one great furnace flam'd; yet from those flames
No light, but rather darkness visible
Serv'd only to discover sights of woe;
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell; hope never comes,
That comes to all: But torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery deluge fed
With ever burning sulphur unconsum'd.
Such place eternal justice had prepared
For rebel angels! here their pris'n ordain'd
In utter darkness, and their portion set
As far remov'd from God and light of heav'n,
As from the centre thrice to th' utmost pole.

To this the poet adds,

Oh how unlike the place from whence they fell!"

How unlike to that heaven which I have been describing, in which there is no night; and all the evils of darkness, in every sense, are for ever secluded from that happy region, where knowledge, holiness and joy, are all inseparable and immortal.

II. "What light of every kind we are made partakers of here on earth, let us use it with holy thankfulness, with zeal and religious improvement." Hereby we may be assisted and animated to travel on through the mingled stages and scenes of light and darkness in this world, till we arrive at the inheritance of the saints in perfect light. It is a glorious blessing to this dark world, that the light of christianity is added to the light of judaism and the light of nature; and that the law of Moses and the gospel of Christ are set before us, in this nation, in their distinct views, on purpose to make our way to happiness more evident and easy. May *the song of Moses, and the song of the Lamb* be sung in our land! But let us never rest satisfied till the light that is let into our minds become a spring of divine life within us, a life of knowledge, holiness and comfort. Let us not be found amongst the number of those who when *light is come into the world, love darkness rather than light*, lest we fall under their condemnation; *John* iii. 19. Let us never rest till we see the evidences of the children of God wrought in us with power; till the *day spring that has visited us from on high* has entered into our spirits, and refined and moulded them into the divine image; till we who are by nature all darkness are made light in the Lord.

Oh what a blessed change does the converting grace of Christ make in the soul of a son or daughter of Adam? It is like the beauty and pleasure which the rising morning diffuses over the face of the earth after a night of storm and darkness: It is so much of heaven let into all the chambers of the soul: It is then only that we begin to know ourselves aright, and know God in his most awful and most lovely manifestations: It is in this light we see the hateful evil of every sin, the beauty of holiness, the worth of the gospel of Christ and of his salvation. It is a light that carries divine heat and life with it; it renews all the powers of the spirit, and introduces holiness, hope and joy, in the room of folly and guilt, sin, darkness and sorrow.

III. If God has wrought this sacred and divine change in our souls, if we are made the children of light, or if we profess to have felt this change, and hope for an interest in this bright inheritance of the saints, *let us put away all the works of darkness*, with hatred and detestation. *Let us walk in the light of truth and holiness;* Eph. v. 8. *Ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord; walk as children of light.* And the apostle repeats his exhortation to the Thessalonians. *Ye are all children of the light and of the day*, and not the sons of night or darkness; *therefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober;—putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation, for God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ;* 1 Thess. v. 5—9.

To animate every christian to this holy care and watchfulness, let us think what a terrible disappointment it will be, after we have made a bright profession of christianity in our lives, to lie down in death in a state of sin and guilt, and to awake in the world of spirits, in the midst of the groans and agonies of hell, surrounded and covered with everlasting darkness. Let our public profession be as illustrious and bright as it will, yet if we indulge works of darkness in secret, night and darkness will be our eternal portion, with the anguish of conscience and the terrors of the Almighty, without one glimpse of hope or relief. It is only those who walk in the light of holiness here, who can be fit to dwell in the presence of a God of holiness hereafter. *Light is sown only for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart;* Psalm xcvii. 11. and it shall break

out one day from amongst the clouds, a glorious harvest; but only the sons and the daughters of light shall taste of the blessed fruits of it.

Think again with yourselves when you are tempted to sin and folly, what if I should be cut off on a sudden, practising the works of darkness, and my soul be summoned into the eternal world, covered with guilt and defilement? Shall I then be fit for the world of light? Will the God of light ever receive me to his dwelling? Do I not hereby render myself unfit company for the angels of light? And what if I should be sent down, to dwell among the spirits of darkness, since I have imitated their sinful manners and obeyed their cursed influences? O may such thoughts as these dwell upon our spirits with an awful solemnity, and be a perpetual guard against defiling our garments with any iniquity, lest our Lord should come and find us thus polluted. Let us walk onwards in the paths of light which are discovered to us in the word of God, and which are illustrated by his holy ordinances, to guide us through the clouds and shades, which attend us in this wilderness, till our Lord Jesus shall come with all his surrounding glories, and take us to the full possession of the inheritance in light.

IV. "Under our darkest nights, our most inactive and heavy hours, our most uncomfortable seasons here on earth, let us remember we are travelling to a world of light and joy." If we happen to lie awake, in midnight darkness, and count the tedious hours one after another in a mournful succession, under any of the maladies of nature, or the sorrows of this life, let us comfort ourselves that we are not shut up in eternal night and darkness without hope, but we are still making our way towards that country, where there is no night, where there is neither sin nor pain, malady nor sorrow.

What if the blessed God is pleased to try us by the withholding of light from our eyes for a season? What if we are called to seek our duty in dark providences, or are perplexed in deep and difficult controversies, wherein we cannot find the light of truth? What if we "sit in darkness and mourning, and see no light, and the beams of divine consolation are cut off, let us *still trust in the name of the Lord, and stay ourselves upon our God*, especially as he manifests himself in the Lamb that was slain, the blessed medium of his mercy." *Isaiah* l. 10. Let us learn to say with the prophet Micah, in the spirit of faith; Micah vii. 8, 9. *When I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light unto me;—he will bring me forth to the light and I shall behold his righteousness.*

"Blessed be God, that the night of ignorance, grief or affliction, which attends us in this world, is not everlasting night. Heaven and glory are at hand; wait and watch for the morning star, for Jesus and the resurrection. Roll on apace in your appointed course, ye suns and moons, and all ye twinkling enlighteners of the sky, carry on the changing seasons of light and darkness in this lower world with your utmost speed, till you have finished all my appointed months of continuance here. The light of faith shews me the dawning of that glorious day, which shall finish all my nights and darknesses for ever. Make haste, O delightful morning, and delay not my hopes. Let me hasten, let me arrive at that blessed inheritance, those mansions of paradise, where night is never known, but one eternal day shall make our knowledge, our holiness, and our joy eternal." *Amen.*

THE PREFACE

TO THE

SECOND VOLUME OF THE OCTAVO EDITION.

IN the first volume of these Discourses, I made an introduction to them, by endeavouring to prove, that "at the departure of the soul from the body by death, the rewards or punishments, that is, the joys or the sorrows of the other world are appointed to commence: And I hope I have there given, from the evidence of scripture, such arguments to support this doctrine, as that the faith of christians may not be staggered and confounded by different opinions, or made to wait for these events, through all the many years that may arise between death and the resurrection.

I know nothing besides this, that is made a matter of controversy in that volume; and I hope those sermons, and these that follow, by the blessing of God, will be made happily useful to christians, to awaken and warn them against the danger of being seized by death in a state unprepared for the presence of God, and the happiness of heaven, and to raise the comforts and joys of many pious souls in the lively expectation of future blessedness.

The last Discourses of this second volume, especially the eternity of the punishments of hell, have been in latter and former years made a matter of dispute; and were I to pursue my enquiries into this doctrine, only by the aids of the light of nature and reason, I fear my natural tenderness might warp me aside from the rules and the demands of strict justice, and the wise and holy government of the great God. But as I confine myself almost entirely to the revelation of scripture, in all my searches into things of revealed religion and christianity, I am constrained to forget or to lay aside that softness and tenderness of animal nature which might lead me astray, and to follow the unerring dictates of the word of God. The scripture frequently, and in the plainest and strongest manner, asserts the everlasting punishment of sinners in hell; and that by all the methods of expression which are used in scripture to signifiy an everlasting continuance.

God's utter hatred and aversion to sin, in this perpetual punishment of it, are manifested many ways: 1. By the just and severe threatenings of the wise and righteous Governor of the world, which are scattered up and down in his word. 2. By the veracity of God in his intimations or narratives of past events, as *Jude verse* 7. "Sodom and Gomorrah *suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.*" 3. By his express predictions; Matt. xxv. 46. *These shall go away into everlasting punishment.* 2 Thess. i. 9. *Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction;* and I might add, 4. By the veracity and truth of all his holy prophets and apostles, and his Son Jesus Christ, at the head of them, whom he has sent to acquaint mankind with the rules of their duty, and the

certain judgment of God in a holy correspondence therewith, and that in such words as seem to admit of no way of escape, or of hope for the condemned criminals.

I must confess here, if it were possible for the great and blessed God any other way to vindicate his own eternal and unchangeable hatred of sin, the inflexible justice of his government, the wisdom of his severe threatenings, and the veracity of his predictions, if it were also possible for him, without this terrible execution, to vindicate the veracity, sincerity and wisdom of the prophets and apostles, and Jesus Christ, his Son, the greatest and chiefest of his divine messengers; and then if the blessed God should at any time, in a consistence with his glorious and incomprehensible perfections, release those wretched creatures from their acute pains and long imprisonment in hell, either with a design of the utter destruction of their beings by annihilation, or to put them into some unknown world, upon a new foot of trial, I think I ought cheerfully and joyfully to accept this appointment of God, for the good of millions of my fellow-creatures, and add my joys and praises to all the songs and triumphs of the heavenly world, in the day of such a divine and glorious release of these prisoners.

But I feel myself under a necessity of confessing, that I am utterly unable to solve these difficulties according to the discoveries of the New Testament, which must be my constant rule of faith, and hope, and expectation, with regard to myself and others. I have read the strongest and best writers on the other side, yet after all my studies I have not been able to find any way how these difficulties may be removed, and how the divine perfections, and the conduct of God in his word, may be fairly vindicated, without the establishment of this doctrine, as awful and formidable as it is.

The ways indeed of the great God, and "*his thoughts, are above our thoughts and our ways, as the heavens are above the earth;* Isaiah lv. 8, 9. yet I must rest and acquiesce where our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father's chief minister, both of his wrath and his love, has left me in the divine revelations of scripture; and I am constrained therefore to leave these unhappy creatures under the *chains of everlasting darkness*, into which they have cast themselves by their wilful iniquities, till the blessed God shall see fit to release them.

This would be indeed such a new, such an astonishing and universal jubilee, both for devils and wicked men, as must fill heaven, earth and hell, with hallelujahs and joy: In the mean time it is my ardent wish, that this awful sense of the terrors of the Almighty, and his everlasting anger, which the word of the great God denounces, may awaken some souls timely to bethink themselves of the dreadful danger into which they are running, before these terrors seize them at death, and begin to be executed upon them without release and without hope.

DISCOURSE VIII.

A SOUL PREPARED FOR HEAVEN.

2 COR. V. 5.

NOW HE THAT HATH WROUGHT US FOR THE SELF-SAME THING, IS GOD.

WHEN this apostle designs to entertain our hope in the noblest manner, and raise our faith to its highest joys, he generally calls our thoughts far away from all present and visible things, and sends them forward to the great and glorious day of the resurrection: He points our meditations to take a distant prospect of the final and complete happiness of the saints, in heaven, when their bodies shall be raised shining and immortal; whereas it is but seldom, that he takes notice of the heaven of separate souls, or that part of our future happiness, which commences at the hour of death. But, in this chapter, the holy writer seems to keep both these heavens in his eye, and speaks of that blessedness, which the spirits of the just shall enjoy, in the presence of the Lord, as soon as they are *absent from the body*, and yet leads our souls onwards also to our last and most perfect state of happiness, which is delayed till our corruptible bodies shall be raised from the dust, and mortality shall be swallowed up in life. *We know, saith he* in the first verse of this chapter, we know that *as soon as our mortal tabernacle*, in which we now dwell, *is dissolved, we have a building* ready for us *in the heavens;* that is, an investiture in a glorious state of holiness and immortality, which waits to receive our spirits when we drop this dying flesh: Yet the felicities of this paradise, or first heaven, shall receive an unspeakable addition and advancement, when Christ shall come the second time, with all his saints, to complete our salvation."

But which heaven soever we arrive at, whether it be this of the separate state, or that when our bodies shall be restored, still we must be wrought up to a proper fitness for it by God himself; and as the end of this verse tells us, he gives us his own Spirit as an earnest of these future blessings. The observation which shall be the subject of my discourse, is this: "Those who shall enjoy the heavenly blessedness hereafter, must be prepared for it here in this world, by the operation of the blessed God."

Here we must take notice, in the first place, that since we are sinful and guilty creatures in ourselves, and have forfeited all our pretences to the favour of God and happiness, we must be restored to his favour, we must have our sins forgiven, we must be justified in his sight with *an everlasting righteousness*, we must be adopted as the children of God, and have a right and title given us to the heavenly inheritance, before we can enter into it, or possess it; and this blessing is procured for us, by the obedience and death of the Son of God. It is in his blood that we find an atonement for our iniquities, and we must be made heirs of glory, by becoming the adopted children of God, and so we are joint-heirs with his Son Jesus, and shall be glorified with him; *Rom.* viii. 17.

And it is by a true and living faith in the Son of God, that we become partakers of this blessing. *God has set forth his Son Jesus as a propitiation for sinners through faith in his blood;* Rom. iii. 24. *We are justified by faith in his blood, and have hope of eternal life through him;* Rom. v. 2. We also receive our adoption, and *become the children of God through faith in Christ Jesus;* Gal. iii. 26. and thereby we obtain a title to some mansion in our Father's house in heaven, since Jesus our elder brother, and our *forerunner*, is admitted into it to take a place there in our name. This is a very considerable part of our necessary preparation for the heavenly world, that we should be believers in the Son of God, and united to him by a living faith; and this *faith also is the gift of God;* Eph. ii. 8. We are wrought up to it by his grace.

But as this does not seem to be the chief thing designed in the words of my text, I shall pass it over thus briefly, and apply myself to consider what that further fitness or preparation for heaven intends, for which we are said here to be wrought up by God himself. The former preparation for heaven, may rather be said to be a relative change, which is included in our pardon or justification, and alters our state from the condemnation of hell, to the favour and love of God: But this latter preparation implies a real change of our nature by sanctifying grace, and gives us a temper of soul suited to the business and blessedness of the heavenly world. This is the preparation which my text speaks of.

The great enquiry therefore at present is, "What are those steps, or gradual operations, by which the blessed God works us up to this fitness for heaven?" And here I shall not run over all the parts and lineaments of the new creature, which is formed by regeneration, nor the particular operations of converting grace, whereby we are convinced of sin, and led to faith and repentance, and new obedience, though these are all necessary to this end; but I shall confine myself only to those things which have a more immediate reference to the heavenly blessedness, and they are such as follow:

I. "God works us up to a preparation for the heavenly felicity, by establishing and confirming our belief, that there is a heaven provided for the saints, and by giving us some clearer acquaintance with the nature, the business, and the blessedness of this heaven." All this is done by the gospel of Christ, and by the secret operation of the blessed God, teaching us to understand his gospel.

Alas! how ignorant were the heathen sages about any future state for the righteous? How bewildered were the best of them in all their imaginations! How vain were all their reasonings upon this subject, and how little satisfaction could they give to an honest enquirer, whether there was any reward provided for good men beyond this life! The light of nature was their guide; and those in whom this feeble taper burned with the fairest lustre, were still left in great darkness about futurity. As the gentile philosophers were left in great uncertainties whether there was any heaven or no, so were their conceptions of heavenly things very absurd and ridiculous; and their various fancies about the nature and enjoyments of it, were all impertinence.

And how little knowledge had the patriarchs themselves, if we may judge of their knowledge by the five books of Moses, which give no plain and express promise of future happiness in another world, neither to Abel nor Noah, to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, or to Moses himself? And were it not for some expressions in the New Testament, and by that xi. chapter to the Hebrews, where we are told, that these good men sought a *heavenly country*, and hoped for happiness in a future and invisible state, we should some-

times be ready to doubt whether they knew almost any thing of the future resurrection and glory.

That great and excellent man Job, had one or two lucid intervals of peculiar brightness, which shone upon him from heaven, in the midst of his distresses, and raised him above and beyond the common level of the dispensation he lived in; yet in the main, when he describes the state of the dead, how desolate and dolesome is his language, and what heavy darkness hangs upon his hope? See his expressions; Job x. 21, 22. *Let me alone, that I may take comfort a little, before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness, and the shadow of death, a land of darkness as darkness itself, and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness.* Mark how this good man heaps one darkness upon another, and makes so formidable a gloom, as was hardly to be dispelled by the common notices given to men in that age.

And if we look into the jewish writings, in and after the days of Moses, we find the men of righteousness frequently entertained with promises of *corn, and wine, and oil,* and other blessings of sense; and few there were amongst them who saw clearly, and firmly believed the heavenly inheritance through the types, and shadows, and figures of Canaan, the promised land, which *flowed with milk and honey.* It is granted there are some hints and discoveries of a blessedness beyond the grave in the writings of David, Isaiah, Daniel, and some of the prophets: But the brightest of these notices fall far short of what the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ has set before us. The Son of God, who came down from heaven, where he had lived from before the creation of this world, has revealed to us infinitely more of the invisible state than all that went before him: He tells us of the pure in heart enjoying the sight of God, and conversing with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the ancient saints: He assures us there are many mansions in his Father's house, and that he went to prepare a place there for his followers. "I tell you, says he, *John* viii. 38. I tell you the things which I have seen with my Father." And when he came again from the dead, he made it appear to his disciples, that he had *brought life and immortality to light by his gospel;* 2 Tim. i. 10.

It is only the New Testament that gives us so bright and satisfactory an account what our future heaven is: The righteous shall be with God, shall behold him, shall dwell with Christ, and see his glory, *they shall worship day and night in his temple,* and sing the praises of him that sits upon the throne, and of the Lamb that has redeemed them by his blood; there shall be no sin, no sorrow, no death, *nor any more pain;* Rev. xxi. 4. they shall have such satisfactions and employments as are worthy of a rational nature, and a soul refined from sense and sin. St. Paul, one of his disciples, was transported into the third heaven before he died, and there learned *unspeakable things;* 2 Cor. xii. 2, 4. and he, together with the other apostles, have published the glories of that future world, which they learned from Jesus, their Lord, and confirmed these things to our faith, by prophecies and miracles without number.

Now the blessed God himself prepares his own people for this heaven of happiness, by giving them a full conviction and assurance of the truth of all these divine discoveries; he impresses them upon their heart with power, and makes them attend to those divine impressions. Every true christian has learned to say within himself, "This celestial blessedness is no dream, is no painted vision, no gay scene of flattering fancy, nor is it a matter of doubtful dispute, or of uncertain opinion. I am assured of it from the words

of Christ, the Son of God, and from his blessed followers, whom he authorized to teach me the things of a future world." He that is taught of God, beholds these glories in the light of a divine faith, which is to him, *the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not yet seen;* Heb. xi. 1.

2. God works up the souls of his people to a preparation for the heavenly state, by "purifying them from every defilement, that might unfit them for the blessedness of heaven." The removal of the guilt of sin, by his pardoning mercy, I have mentioned before, as necessary to our entrance into the heavenly state; and we must walk through this world, this defiling world, with all holy watchfulness, lest our souls be blemished with new pollutions, lest new guilt come upon our consciences, and the thoughts of appearance before God be terrible to us. That soul is very much unfit for an entrance into the presence of a holy God, who is ever plunging itself into new circumstances of guilt, by a careless and unholy conversation. To stand upon the borders of life, and the very edge of eternity, will be dreadful to those who have given themselves a loose to criminal pleasures, and indulged their irregular appetites and passions.

But it is not only a conscience purged from the guilt of sin, by the blood of Christ, but a soul washed also from the defiling power and taint of sin, by the sanctifying Spirit, that is necessary to make us meet for the heavenly inheritance. This is that purification which I now chiefly intend; Matt. v. 8. *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Nothing that defileth* must enter into the city of God on high, *nor whosoever maketh a lie, or loveth it;* Rev. xxi. 27. No injustice, no falsehood, no guile or deceit, can be admitted within those gates: They must be *without guile*, both in their heart and tongue, if they will *stand before the throne of God;* Rev. xiv. 5. Sincerity and truth of soul, with all the beauties of an upright heart and character, are necessary to prepare an inhabitant for that blessed state. There must be no envy, no wrath or malice, no revenge, nor any of the angry principles that dwell in our flesh and blood, or that inflame and disturb the mind, will be found in those regions of peace and love. There must be no pride or ambition, no self-exaltation and vanity that can dwell in heaven, for it cast out the angels of glorious degree, when they would exalt themselves above their own station. "Pride was the condemnation of the devil," and it must not dwell in a human heart, that ever hopes for a heavenly dwelling-place; 1 *Tim.* iii. 6. and *Jude*, verse 6. There must be no sensual and intemperate creature there, no covetous selfishness, no irregular passions, no narrowness of soul, no uncharitable and party spirit, will ever be found in that country of diffusive love and joy.

And since the best of christians have had the seeds of many of these iniquities in their hearts, and they have made a painful complaint of these rising corruptions of nature upon many occasions, these iniquities must be mortified and slain by the work of the Spirit of God within us, if ever we ourselves would live the divine life of heaven; *Rom.* viii. 13. There is a great deal of this purifying work to be done in the souls of all of us, before we can be prepared for the heavenly world, and though we cannot arrive at perfection here, yet we must be wrought up to a temper in some measure fit to enter into that blessedness: And God is training his people up for this purpose, all the days of their travels through this desert world. Happy souls, who feel themselves more and more released from the bonds of these iniquities, day by day, and thereby feel within themselves, the growing evidences of a joyful hope!

3. God does not only purify us from every sin, in order to prepare us for heaven, but

"he is ever loosening and weaning our hearts from all those lawful things in this life, which are not to be enjoyed in heaven." Our sensual appetites, and our carnal desires, so far as they are natural, though not sinful, must die before we can enter into eternal life. *Flesh and blood cannot inherit* that divine, incorruptible, and refined happiness; 1 *Cor.* xv. 50. Riches and treasures of gold and silver which *the rust can corrupt, and which thieves can break through and steal,* are not provided for the heavenly state; *Matt.* vi. 19. They are all of the earthly kind, and too mean for the relish of a heavenly spirit. Although a christian may possess many of these things in the present life, yet his affections must be divested of them, and his soul divided from them, if he would be a saint indeed, and ever ready for the purer blessings of paradise. The businesses, the cares and the concerns of this secular life, are ready to drink up our spirits too much while we are here; we are too prone to mingle our very souls with them, and thereby grow unfit for heavenly felicities: And therefore it is that our Saviour has warned us; Luke xxi. 34. *Let not your hearts be overcharged with the cares of this world* any more than with *surfeiting and drunkenness,* if you would be always ready for your flight to a better state, and meet the summons of your Lord to paradise.

There are also many curious speculations and delightful amusements, which may lawfully entertain us while we are here; there are sports and recreations which may divert the flesh or the mind in a lawful manner, whilst we dwell in tabernacles of flesh and blood, and are encompassed with mortal things: But the soul that is wrought for heaven must arise to a holy indifference to all the entertainments of flesh and sense, and time, if it would put on the appearance of a heavenly inhabitant. Christians that would be ever ready for the glories of a better world must be such, in some measure, as the apostle describes; 1 *Cor.* vii. 29—31. They must *rejoice* with such moderation in their dearest comforts of life, *as though they rejoiced not;* they must *weep* and mourn for the loss of them, with such a divine self-government, *as though they wept not;* they must *buy as though they possessed not;* they must *use this world as not abusing it* in any instance; but must look upon the fashions and the scenes of it as vanishing things, and have their hearts *set on the things that are above, where Christ Jesus is at the Father's right hand;* Col. iii. 1, 2.

If you ask me, what methods the blessed God uses in order to attain these ends, and to purify and refine the soul for heaven, I answer, he sometimes does it by sharp strokes of affliction, making our interests in the creature bitter to us, that we may be weaned from the relish of them, and the power of divine grace must accompany all his weaning providences, or the work will not be done. Sometimes again he weans the soul from the lawful things of this world, by permitting our earthly enjoyments to plunge us into difficulties, to seize the heart with anxieties, or to surround us with sore temptations: Then, when we feel ourselves falling into sin, and bruised or defiled thereby, we lose our former gust of pleasure in them; and when we are recovered by divine grace, we are more effectually weaned from such kind of temptations for the future; but it is impossible in the compass of a few lines to describe the various methods which the blessed God uses to wean the spirit from all its earthly attachments, and to work it up to a meetness for *the inheritance of the saints in light.* Blessed souls, who are thus loosened and weaned from sensible things, though it be done by painful sufferings!

4. The great God not only weans our hearts from those things that are not to be enjoyed in heaven, but he gives us a holy appetite and relish, suited to the provisions of

the heavenly world, and raises our desires and tendencies of soul toward them. By nature our minds are estranged from God, and from all that is divine and holy; we have no desires after his love, nor delight in the thoughts of dwelling with God: But when divine grace has effectually touched the heart, it ever tends upwards to that world of holiness and peace. So the needle, when it is touched by the loadstone, ever points to the beloved pole-star, and seems uneasy when it is diverted from it, nor will it rest till it return thither again.

Do the sweet sensations of divine love make up a great part of the heavenly blessedness? The soul is in some measure fitted for it, who can say with David in Psalm iv. 6. *Lord, lift thou up upon me the light of thy countenance, and it shall rejoice my heart more than if corn, and wine, and oil abounded,* and all earthly blessings were multiplied upon me; for in thy love is the life of my soul, *and thy loving-kindness is better than life;* Psalm lxiii. 3.

Is the felicitating presence of God to be enjoyed in the future world, and shall we see his face there with unspeakable delight? Then those souls are prepared for heaven, who can say with the Psalmist, Psal. xlii. 2. *When shall I come and appear before God?* When shall I have finished my travels through this wilderness, that I may arrive at my Father's house? *This one thing have I desired, that I may dwell in the house of God for ever, to behold the beauty of the Lord there;* Psal. xxvii. 4. It is enough for me that *I shall behold thy face in righteousness, and I shall be satisfied when I awake* out of the dust *with thy likeness;* Psal. xvii. 15. *With my soul have I desired thee, O Lord, in the night,* in the darkness of this desert world I have longed for the light of thy face, *and with my spirit within me I will seek thee early;* Isaiah xxvi. 9. *Whom have I in heaven but thee, neither is there any on earth that I desire beside thee;* Psal. lxxiii. 25. Oh! when shall the day come when there shall be no more distance and estrangement of my heart from God, but I shall feel all my powers for ever near him?

Is the sweet society of Jesus to be enjoyed in the heavenly region, then those are prepared for this happiness, who feel in themselves *a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better* than the most pleasurable scenes on earth; *Phil.* i. 23. I am willing, and rejoice in the thought of it, rather *to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord;* 2 Cor. v. 8. I behold in the light of faith the dawning glory of that day, when Jesus shall return from heaven, when he shall revisit this wretched world, and put an end to these wretched scenes of vanity. *Behold he cometh in the clouds, and every eye shall see him;* Rev. i. 7. He comes into our world to them that look for him, not to be made a sacrifice for sin, but to complete our salvation; *Heb.* ix. 28. I long to behold him, and I love the thought of his appearance; 2 *Tim.* iv. 8.

Is there not only a freedom from pain and sorrow among the saints on high, but is there also an eternal release from all the bonds of sin and temptation? Then that soul discovers a degree of preparation for it, who can say with a holy groan and grief of heart, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death?* Rom. vii. 24. *In this tabernacle we groan,* indeed, *being burdened,* and are desirous rather *to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven,* with our holy state of immortality; 2 *Cor.* v. 4. That God who has wrought these divine breathings in the soul will one day fulfil them all; and he is working up the christian to a blessed meetness for this felicity, by awakening these wishes in the very centre of the heart. Happy heart, which feels these holy aspirations, these divine breathings.

5. The blessed God is pleased to work us up to a preparation for the heavenly world, by forming the temper of our minds into a likeness to the inhabitants of heaven, that is, to God himself, to Christ Jesus, the Son of God, to angels and saints, to *the spirits of the just made perfect*. From the children of folly and sin we must be transformed into the children of God, we must be created anew after his image, and resemble our heavenly Father, that we may be capable of enjoying his love, and rejoicing in his presence. We must be conformable to the image of his only-begotten Son Christ Jesus, and walk and live as he did in this world, that we may be prepared to dwell with him in the world to come; *Rom.* viii. 29. 1 *John* iv. 17. We must have the same temper and spirit of holiness wrought in us, that we may be imitators of all the holy ones that dwell in heaven, and that we may be followers of the saints, who have been strangers and travellers in this world in all former ages.

How can we hope to have free conversation with glorious beings, which are so unlike to ourselves, as God, and Christ, and angels are unlike to the sinful children of men? How can we imagine ourselves to be fit company for such pure and perfect beings, beauteous, and shining in holiness, while we are defiled with the iniquities of our natures, and ever falling into new guilt and pollution? Happy souls, who can say, through grace, I have "walked in the light as God is in the light;" 1 *John* i. 7. and I trust, O Father, I shall dwell for ever with thee there. I have been a follower of the Lamb through the thorny and rugged passages of this wilderness, and I humbly hope I shall sit with thee, O Jesus, upon a throne, glorious and holy. I have been a companion of them who have finished the christian race, who *have fought the good fight*, and obtained the victory, and I trust I shall have a name and a place amongst all you holy ones who have fought and overcome. Oh for a heart and tongue furnished for such appeals to all the blessed inhabitants of paradise, the possessors of those mansions on high!

6. The grace of God works us up to a preparation for heaven, "by carrying us through those trials and sufferings, those labours and conflicts here in this life, which will not only make heaven the sweeter to us, but will make it more honourable for God himself to bestow this heaven upon us." When the spirits of a creature are almost worn out with the toilsome labours of the day, what an additional sweetness does he find in rest and repose! What an inward relish and satisfaction to the soul, that has been fatigued under a long and tedious war with sins and temptations, to be transported to such a place where sin cannot follow them, and temptation can never reach them! How will it enhance all the felicities of the heavenly world when we enter into it, to feel ourselves released from all the trials and distresses, and sufferings which we have sustained in our travels thitherwards! The review of the waves and the storms wherein we had been tossed for a long season, and had been almost shipwrecked there, will make the peaceful haven of eternity, to which we shall arrive, much more agreeable to every one of the sufferers; 2 Cor. iv. 17. *Our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, are* in this way *working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, and preparing us for the possession of it.

But it should be added also, that the prize of life, and the crown of glory, is much more honourably bestowed on those who have been long fighting, running, and labouring to obtain it. Heaven will appear as a condecent reward of all the faithful servants of God upon earth, and a divine recompence of their labours and sufferings; 2 *Thess.* i. 6. "As *it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you*, so

to give to those *who are troubled* rest and salvation." This is that equitable or condecent fitness that God, as Governor of the world, has wisely appointed and made necessary before our entrance into heaven. Christ himself our forerunner, and *the Captain of our Salvation, was made perfect through sufferings;* Heb. ii. 10. and was trained up for his throne on high " by enduring the contradiction of sinners," and the variety of agonies which attended his life and death in this lower world, this stage of conflict and sufferings; *Heb.* xii. 1—3.

Though we cannot pretend by our labours in the race to have merited the prize, yet we must labour through the race before we receive it. Our conflicts cannot pretend to have deserved the crown which is promised, but we must fight the battles of the Lord before we obtain it. This was St. Paul's encouragement and hope, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. *I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me,—and not to me only, but to all those who love his appearance.* There is a great deal of divine wisdom in his appointment, that the children of God may be counted in this sense worthy of his kingdom, for which they also suffer; 2 *Thess.* i. 5. and that the relish of those satisfactions may be doubled to all the sufferers.

7. God yet further preparcs and works up his people for heaven by " teaching them somc of the employments of the heavenly world, and initiating and inuring them to the practice thereof." Is the contemplation of the blessed God, in his nature, and his various perfections, the business of glorified souls? God teaches his children, whom he is training up for glory, to practise this holy contemplation: He fixes their thoughts upon the wonders of his nature and his grace, his works of creation and providence, the blessings of his redeeming love by his Son Jesus, and the terrors of his justice which shall be executed by the same hand, while the soul at the same timc can appeal to God with holy delight, *My meditation of thee shall be sweet indeed;* Psalm civ. 34. O may I dwell for ever in the midst of thy light, and see all thy wondrous glory diffused around me, and make my joys everlasting!

Are we told that heaven consists also in " beholding the glory of Christ," *John* xvii. 24. and how happily does God prepare his saints for this part of heaven, by filling their thoughts with the various graces and honours of Jesus the Saviour? And when they arc in their lonely retirements, they trace the footsteps of their beloved through all his labours and sorrows in this mortal state, even from his cradle to his cross; they follow him in thcir holy meditations to his agonies in the garden, to his anguish of soul there; through all his sufferings in death, through the grave, his bed of darkness, and trace him on still to his glorious resurrection, and to his ascent to his Father's house, whcn a bright cloud like a chariot bore him up to heaven with attending angels: *This is my beloved,* says thc soul, *and this is my friend,* whom I shall see with joy in the upper world: *He is altogether lovely,* and he demands my highest love.

Is it part of the happiness of heaven to converse with the blessed God by holy addresses of acknowledgments and praise, as it is described in *Rev.* iv. and v. and vii. *They are before the throne of God day and night, and serve him in his temple;* Rev. vii. 15. and join with holy joy to pronounce that divine song, *Blessing and honour, and glory and power, be to him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever;* chapter v. 13. *Worthy art thou, O Lord, to receive glory and honour,—for thou hast created all things* for thy pleasure; chapter iv. 11. *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive*

power, and riches, and strength, glory and blessing, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us unto God, by thy blood, out of every kindred and nation; chapter v. 9, 12. Now it is evident that those whose hearts and lips are joyfully fitted to pronounce this holy song, and to join in this harmony, are fitted also for these blessed employments of the heavenly state: And yet at the same time they abase themselves in the dust of humility, and, with the living creatures, or angels, they fall down before the throne, and with the elders they cast down their crowns at his foot, they confess themselves the sons of earth and dust, and would appear as nothing, while God is all; *Rev.* iv. 9, 10. and v. 8.

Are all the powers of glorified nature in heaven active in the unknown services of God and Christ there? So the saints are trained up for this service and this activity, here on earth, by diligence and delight in their less noble employments, the inferior labours and duties that providence demands of them here, whereby they are prepared for more glorious employment on high; for heaven is no idle or inactive state.

Do some of the satisfactions of the heavenly world arise from the "sweet society of the blessed above, their fervent love to each other, their mutual delight in holy converse, the joy that arises in the heart of each upon a survey of the happiness of all the holy and blessed inhabitants? Does benevolence and goodness of every kind overflow in the heavenly world?" It is plain that God is training up his own children for this blessedness, by employing them in this manner, while they are below: He is in some measure fitted for this heaven, who can say, *the saints are the excellent of the earth, in whom is all my delight;* Psal. xvi. 3. I love them from my soul, because they love my God and my Saviour. I see the image of the Father, and of Jesus his Son in them, and I cannot but love that image wheresoever I behold it. I feel myself ready to rejoice when my fellow christians partake of joy, and I long for that temper of mind when I shall delight myself in the felicity of all my fellow-saints in perfection, and shall make their heaven a part of my own. But I proceed not here, because this would anticipate what I design hereafter.

8. God is pleased to work up his people to a preparation for the heavenly state, by "giving them a pledge and earnest of the blessedness of heaven," that is, by sending his own Spirit into their hearts under this very character, both as the spring of a divine life, and as the evidence of our hope, and sometimes bestowing upon them such foretastes of the heavenly world, by the operations of his holy Spirit, which are too joyful and glorious to be fully expressed in mortal language; but we shall attempt something of it in another discourse.

Here this Discourse may be divided.

I proceed now to seek what inferences or edifying remarks may be made upon our meditations thus far:

Remark I. We learn from my text "what are the brightest, the plainest, and the surest evidences of our interest in the heavenly blessedness: Are we trained up to it, and prepared for it?" Has the blessed God wrought up our souls to any hopeful degrees of this preparation? Has he in any measure made us *meet for the inheritance of the saints in light?*

I grant the scripture teaches us, that it is by a true and living faith in our Lord Jesus Christ that we obtain a title to eternal life, according to the proposals of the covenant of grace in the gospel; but our preparation for heaven by a holy and heavenly temper of

mind and conduct of life, is the fairest and most incontested evidence of the truth and life of our faith, and such a proof of it as will stand the test both in life and death, in this world, and in the world to come. If we would manifest our faith in Christ to be sincere and genuine, and effectual for our salvation, we must make it appear, that we are growing up into the image of Christ in all things, we must be formed after the likeness of the Son of God, who is our great example, and *our forerunner* into heaven; and where this evidence is found the soul cannot fail of salvation. Wheresoever there is this fitness for the joys on high, God will assuredly bestow these divine pleasures. It is for such souls that he has prepared a heaven, and when he has prepared such souls for the heavenly world, he will surely bring them to the possession of it.

Of how great moment and importance is it then for each of us to examine ourselves with watchful diligence and sincerity, whether we are in any measure fitted for the blessedness above: And to this end we may run over in our enquiries all the former steps of preparation.

Let us enquire of our souls then, am I so fully persuaded of this state of future happiness, as to resolve this shall be my aim, this my everlasting pursuit? Have we seen this blessedness in the various representations of it in the word of God, as the most amiable and desirable thing, and have we set our faces to travel thither with a holy purpose and determination, through grace, never to tire or grow weary till we arrive at the enjoyment of it? Have we fixed our hope and expectation upon the blessed promises in the word, and are we by these promises endeavouring daily to *cleanse ourselves from all defilements of flesh and spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God?* Do we obtain any victories over our spiritual enemies, and maintain our pious conflicts against all the oppositions which we meet with in our way? Do we labour to suppress every rising ferment of envy, pride, wrath, sensuality, and those corrupt appetites and passions which render us unfit for that holy and heavenly world? Are our hearts daily more mortified to the things of this world, the enjoyments of flesh and sense, which are not to be found in heaven? Are our hearts more weaned from the sensual satisfactions and intemperate delights of the animal life? Are we dead to the temptations of gold and silver, the grandeurs and the gaieties, and splendors of this present low life of flesh and blood, which are no part nor portion of the heavenly felicity? Do we view the tempting things of this world with a holy indifference, and possess and use them with affections so calm and so cool, as becomes a rank of beings that have a nobler, a richer, and a more exalted hope? Have we found the labours and burdens, the sorrows and afflictions of the present state, happy instruments to prepare us for the blessedness above, by curing all our vain and carnal desires? Are we in any measure imitators of those who have gone before us *through faith and patience*, and are made possessors of the promised joy? *Heb.* v. 12. Are we *followers of God as dear children?* Eph. v. 1. Have we the image of our heavenly Father created anew in us, and do we walk as our Lord Jesus Christ also walked, while he was in this wilderness travelling to his Father's house? Are our earnest desires towards this sort of felicity excited and raised high? Have we a strong tendency of soul to the holy enjoyments of the upper world? Do we sigh and groan after a complete freedom from sin, and a deliverance from every temptation? Do we employ ourselves with pleasure in the work and business of heaven, in the holy contemplation of God, in a delightful survey of the person and offices of his Son Jesus, his wondrous condescension, and his amazing compassion? Do we take pleasure in con-

versing with God our Father by holy addresses of praise and thankfulness? Do we love all the saints, and delight in their society, and do we rejoice to spend our time with them in heavenly conversation, though they may be amongst the lower ranks of life here on earth? And do we diffuse our love through all who wear the image of God, and take a pleasing satisfaction of soul in their increase of holiness, and rejoice in their joys?

If God has thus fitted thee, " O christian, in this manner, for the mansions of the happy world, then surely he has set thee apart for himself, he has begun eternal life in thee, the dawn of eternal glory is risen upon thee, and he will bring thee into the complete noon of blessedness, into the overflowing light of divine beatitudes." *Arise and shine,* O christian, for thy life is come, *the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee;* Isaiah lx. 1. thou hast no need to ascend into heaven to search for thy evidences among the decrees of God, and to pry into the rolls of electing grace; for if thou hast been transformed into a heavenly temper, thy name is surely *written in the Lamb's book of life;* heaven is begun within thee, and God will fulfil his own work.

II. " What a solid comfort is it to poor, mourning, troubled, afflicted souls under all their sorrows, their frailties, their temptations, and infirmities here on earth, that they have a clear evidence of heaven within them." This is such a peace as Jesus Christ left to his disciples by legacy; *John* xiv. 27. such as *the world cannot give,* and such as the world cannot take away.

This is a spring of constant and divine consolation to those who seem to be worn out with old age or infirmities of nature, and they complain they are fit for no service in this world; but if they can feel in themselves this holy fitness for the enjoyments of heaven, they have a rich and living fountain of pleasure in their own breasts, ever springing, ever flowing, and such as will follow them with daily supplies of pleasure, if they are not wanting to themselves, through all this wilderness, till they arrive at that land where all the rivers of blessing meet and join in a full stream, to make the inhabitants for ever happy.

" It may be, O christian, thou art afraid that thou hast felt but little of this divine preparation; thou seest so many defects in thyself daily, so much unlikeness to God, so much working of iniquity, such restless efforts of the body of sin, so much prevalence of temptation, so much coldness in duty, such deadness in acts of devotion, such frequent returns of guilt and pain in a tender conscience, and so many enemies to struggle with every step of thy way to heaven, that thou art greatly discouraged and afraid this divine preparation is not wrought in thee. Enquire then yet further; Are all these melancholy scenes, both within and without, the matter of thy sincere grief and burden? Canst thou say *in this tabernacle, I groan, being burdened* with the body of sin, as well as with the frailties and pains of nature? Canst thou say sincerely, that thy inmost desires are towards God and his glory in the present life, and towards his enjoyment in the life to come? Dost thou maintain a constant converse with heaven as well as thou canst, though it be so much broken, and so often painfully interrupted? Hast thou a continual and settled aversion and hatred to sin, and a holy jealousy and fear of its defilements? Hast thou a restless breathing of soul after greater likeness to God, and greater communion with him? Dost thou delight in spiritual and holy conversation; and does thy zeal for the honour of God, and his Son Jesus, carry thee forth to those actions which are suitable to thy station, for the advancement of religion in the world? Be assured then that God is training thee up for this heavenly state, and has in some measure prepared thee for it. God has begun in thee the business and blessedness of the upper world. In the midst

of all thy sorrows and complaints here below, peace be with thee, and joy in the Lord, for thy salvation and thy felicity shall be completed."

III. "How vain, and idle, and unreasonable, are all the hopes of sinners, that they shall ever arrive at heaven without any preparation for it here?" There is nothing divine and holy begun in them in this world, and yet they hope to be made happy in the world that is to come; there is nothing of true grace wrought in their hearts here, and yet they vainly expect to be made perfect in pleasure and glory hereafter.

"Think with thyself, O carnal creature, that heaven will be a burden to thee; the powers, the appetites, and passions of thy sinful nature, will not suffer thee to relish the joys of the heavenly state. Dost thou imagine that a worm or serpent of the earth, or a swine which is ever tumbling in the mire, can be entertained with the golden ornaments and splendors of a palace? Or will the stupid ass be delighted with the harmony of a harp or viol? No more can a soul of a carnal and sensual taste, and which is ever seeking and groveling after earthly gratifications, be pleased or gratified with the refined enjoyments of the heavenly world. Thou must have a new nature, new appetites and affections, ere thou canst partake of divine joys, or relish them if thou wert placed in the midst of them. Holy adoration of God, and humble converse with him in worship, converse with the saints about divine things, perfect purity and devotion, with the meditation of the excellencies of Christ, and the sight of him in his ordinances, have never yet been the object of thy delight or joy: nay, they have rather been thy aversion; and shouldst thou have the gates of heaven open before thee, and see what business the holy souls there are employed in, thou wouldst find no desire to such sort of satisfactions; the place and the company would be thy burden, if thou couldst be let at once into the midst of them.

"Think again, O sinful wretch, thy carnality of soul, thy supreme love of sensual and brutal joys, the secret malice or envy, the pride and impiety of thy heart, have prepared thee for another sort of company; thou art fitted for hell by the very temper of thy spirit, for such are the inhabitants of that miserable world, and in thy present state there can be no admission for thee into heaven. Thou hast treasured up food for *the worm that never dies*, for the eternal anguish of conscience; thou hast made thyself fit fuel by indulgence of thy sinful and rebellious appetites and passions, for the *fiery indignation* of God; and every day thou persistest in this state, thy preparation for the dark regions of sin and sorrow is increased." But this leads me to the last remark.

IV. "How dangerous a thing it is for a sinner to continue a day longer in a state so unprepared for the heavenly world." Dost thou not know, whilst we are inhabitants in these regions of mortality, we are borderers upon death; and if we are unprepared for heaven, we are borderers upon damnation and hell? *Our life is but a vapour*, and the next puff may blow us away into the regions of everlasting darkness, misery, and despair. Alas! how much of this divine preparation do the best of saints stand in need of for an immediate entrance into heaven? What care do they take, how constant are their labours, and how fervent their prayers to increase in this divine fitness, in these holy and heavenly qualifications! And dost thou vainly imagine to exchange earth for heaven at once, and to be received into the pure and holy mansions of paradise, without any conformity to God or Christ, or the rest of the inhabitants of that world?

Objection. But some idle and slothful creatures will be ready to object and say, if it be God who creates his people anew, according to his own image, and fits them

for heaven; if we must be wrought up by his power and grace for the participation of this glory, what can we do towards it ourselves? Or why are we charged and exhorted to prepare ourselves for heaven? Since then it is God must do this work, why may we not lie still, and wait till his grace shall prepare us?

I answer, No, by no means: for God is wont to exert his grace only while creatures are in the use of his appointments, and fulfil their duty. This language therefore, and these excuses, seem to be the mere cavils of a carnal mind, or the voice of sloth and indolence. Those who have no inclination to prepare themselves for the joys of the heavenly state, may wait and expect divine influences in vain, if they will never stir up themselves to practise what is in their own power, and to attempt what the gospel of grace demands.

In almost all the transactions of God with men, it is the way of his wisdom to join our diligence and his grace together; and there are many scriptures that give us sufficient notice of this. See how St. Paul argues with the Philippians, and stirs them up to zeal and activity in securing their own salvation by the hope of divine assistances; Philip. ii. 12, 13. *Work out your own salvation, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do.* So said David to his son Solomon, when he appointed him to build the temple of the Lord; 1 Chron. xxviii. 20. *Be strong and of good courage, and do it,—for the Lord God, even my God, will be with thee, and will not fail thee nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work.* This was the charge also that God gave to his people Israel; Lev. xx. 7. *Sanctify yourselves, and be ye holy,—keep my statutes; I am the Lord who sanctifieth you.* So the psalmist tells us; Psalm iv. 3. *The Lord hath set apart,* or separated, *him who is godly for himself;* and yet, 2 Cor. vi. 17. the Lord commands his people to "separate themselves unto him, to come out from amongst the sinners of this world; and *be you separate, saith the Lord, and I will receive you.*" So in other places of scripture, divine wisdom commands sinners to fulfil their duty; Prov. i. 23. *Turn ye at my reproof:* And yet in Psalm lxxx. 3. the church prays, *Turn us, O Lord, and we shall be saved.* The case is very much the same even in the things that relate to this life, wherein divine assistance and blessing are connected with our diligence in duty. Solomon, tells us, Prov. x. 4. *The hand of the diligent maketh rich;* and yet verse 22. it is *the blessing of the Lord that maketh rich also.* We can never expect the favours of heaven, unless we are zealous to obey the commands of heaven.

When the sinful children of men are found waiting on God in his own appointed ordinances, then they are in the fairest way to receive divine communications, and be transformed into saints. If the blind man had not obeyed the voice of Christ, *John* ix. 7. and washed himself in the pool of Siloam, he could not expect to have received his eye-sight. If the man with the withered hand, *Matt.* xii. 10, 13. had not used his own endeavours to stretch forth his hand at the command of Christ, I can hardly believe it would have been restored to its ancient vigour and usefulness. If the poor impotent creature had not been waiting at the side of the pool of Bethesda, *John* v. 5—9. he had not met with the blessed Jesus, nor been healed by his miraculous power. You will say, perhaps, that our blessed Saviour could have visited him in his own house, could have directed his journey towards his habitation, or have sent for him into the public, and healed him there. No; our Lord did not choose either of these ways; but

while the man was waiting at the pool, where he had encouragement to hope for a cure, there the Lord found him, and healed him.

Let not any presuming sinner therefore, who is sensible of his own unfitness for heaven, dare to continue in a careless indifference about so important a concern: Let him not put off his own conscience with this foolish excuse, "It is God must do all in us, and for us, and therefore I will do nothing myself." Dost thou think, O soul, that this will be a sufficient answer to him that shall judge thee in the great and solemn day? May you not expect to hear the Judge reply terribly to such an excuse, "You never sought after this preparation for heaven, and you must be plunged into hell, for which your own rebellion and slothfulness have prepared you."

But perhaps you will object again, What can so feeble, so sinful a creature as I am, do towards this divine work?

I answer. Canst thou not separate one quarter of an hour daily to think of thy dreadful circumstances, and thy eternal danger in a sinful and defiled state of soul? Think of the uncertainty of life, and how sudden thy summons may be into the eternal and unchangeable state. Survey thyself in thy sinful condition both of heart and life, and see how unfit thou art for the company of all the holy ones above. Meditate on these thy perilous circumstances, till thy heart be deeply affected therewith; fall down before God in humble acknowledgment of thy former guilt and pollutions: Give up thyself to him with holy solemnity, to have thy heart turned away from every sin, and strongly inclined to holiness and heaven. Commit thy soul, guilty and defiled as it is, into the hands of Jesus the Mediator; entrust thy cause with him as an all-sufficient Saviour; entreat that he would cleanse thee from all thy guilt and pollution, by the blood of his sacrifice, and the grace of his Spirit; that blood of atonement which has procured for sinners pardon and peace with God, and those operations of his grace which may sanctify thy sinful nature. Address thyself to the exalted Saviour for healing influences from his hand to cure all the maladies of thy soul, to form thee after his image, and to make thee a son of God. Pray with holy importunity for this necessary and divine blessing, wait on God in secret and in public; *give him no rest night or day*, till he has renewed thy soul, and transformed thee into a new creature, and given thee a relish of the heavenly enjoyments: Dwell at the throne of grace till thou feelest thy heart drawn upward and heavenward, and watch against every thing that would defile thy soul anew, or make thee unfit to enter into the company of the blessed.

Permit me here to dwell a little upon those motives that should awaken thee to bethink thyself ere it be too late, before the grave has shut its mouth upon thee and thou art consigned to the place of eternal misery. Awake, awake, O impenitent sinners, who are as yet unprepared for the business and blessedness of the heavenly state; awake and exert your souls in warmest reflections on matters of infinite importance.

1. Think with yourselves how much the great God has done towards the preparation of sinful men for this heaven; think seriously of his long-suffering goodness, and his sparing mercy, which should have led you long ago to a melting sense of your own folly, and brought you back unto him by humble repentance. For what reason were his patience and his long-suffering exercised towards you if not for this very purpose? *Rom.* ii. 4. Think of the blessings of nature with which he has surrounded you, and the comforts of this life wherewith he has furnished you, in order to allure your thoughts towards him, who is the spring of all goodness; and to raise your desires towards him: It is he

invites you, who will be the everlasting portion and happiness of his people, and in whose favour consists life and felicity; and dare not any longer neglect your preparation for this happiness, which consists in the enjoyment of God, lest you should be cut off before you are prepared.

2. Consider again what Jesus the Son of God has done and suffered; and consider what he is yet doing towards the preparation of souls for heaven: He came down to our world to undertake the glorious and dreadful work of the redemption of sinners from the curse of the law and the terrors of hell, and to procure a heaven for every rebellious creature that would return to God his Father. Think of the agonies of his death with which he purchased mansions of glory for those that receive his grace in his own appointed methods, those that are willing to have their hearts and minds formed into a suitable frame to receive this felicity. Remember that he is risen from the dead, he is ascended to prepare a place in glory for those that are willing to follow him through the paths of holiness. Hearken to the many kind invitations and allurements of his gospel, which calls to the worst of sinners to return and live, and entreats and exhorts those who are in the ends of the earth, and upon the borders of hell, *to look unto him that they may be saved;* Isaiah xlv. 22. Take heed that you suffer not these seasons of his inviting love to slide away and vanish unimproved; take heed how you rebel against the language of the grace of his gospel, and thereby prepare yourselves for double and everlasting destruction.

3. Think again, what blessed assistances he has proposed to those who are desirous to be trained up for heaven; how many thousand souls, as carnal, as sensual, and as criminal, as yours are, have been recovered by the word of his gospel, and the influences of his Spirit, to a new nature and life of holiness? How many are there, who from *children of wrath,* have become *the sons and daughters* of the most high God, heirs of this blessedness, and prepared for the enjoyment of it? O take heed that you resist not his grace, nor rebel against the kind and sacred motions of the blessed Spirit within you, when his very office and business is to change your sinful natures, and to prepare you for the regions of eternal holiness and peace.

4. Think, yet further, what advantages you have had from the weekly ministrations of the word of grace, from reading the book of God in your own language, and from the pious education many of you have enjoyed in the families from whence you sprung. Think what awakening hints you have received by the inward conviction of your own consciences, and by the christian friends you may have conversed with: Have you not been told plainly enough by the voice of conscience, that you are now utterly unprepared for heaven? Have not public and private admonitions given you sufficient warning of the danger of your present state? And after all this will you proceed in your sinful course, till you arrive at the very gates of hell and destruction, till you have prepared yourselves, and made your souls ripe for the vengeance of God, and are plunged into it by death without remedy or relief.

5. Consider how dreadful will your state be, if death meet you in all your guilt and defilements, unwashed, unpardoned, and unsanctified, without any garment of righteousness, without any *robe of salvation.* What a terrible sentence is that which death will pronounce upon every such sinner the moment that he strikes their heart? Hear it and tremble, O miserable creature! Hear the formidable and eternal sentence, *Let him that is unholy be unholy still;* Rev. xxii. 11. Let him that is unprepared for heaven, go down to the regions of death and hell, for which his iniquities have best prepared him.

6. Think with yourselves, if you have any thing of importance to do in this world, or have any momentous scene of life to pass through, how diligent are you in preparation for it? If you are but to visit the court of a prince, or go to make your addresses to any great man of honour and power, or to be admitted into any numerous society of a superior character, how diligently do you endeavour to furnish yourselves with such knowledge of the common ceremonies of life, and such ornaments about your body, as may render you acceptable amongst those whom you are going to converse with? And does not an entrance into the court of heaven, into the presence of a God of holiness, and into the society of pure and blessed spirits, require some solicitude and care about those ornaments and qualifications which are necessary for so solemn and glorious an appearance? If you are designing in this life to commence any trade or business for your employment and your support, you are willing to serve an apprenticeship of seven years in order to a preparation for the exercise of this public business; and can you not afford one day in a week to learn the business of heaven, and to prepare for the blessedness of it?

And let parents also consider with themselves, what pains they have taken that their children may be fit for the trades and employments of life to which they design them, and then let each enquire of their own consciences, "have I ever done so much to train up my son for the heavenly world, to fit him for the appearance before God, and saints and angels, and for all the unknown services of that celestial country?"

7. Go on yet further, O impenitent sinners, and consider with yourselves what a blessedness it is to be prepared for heaven; for then you are prepared for death, and at once you take away all the terrors of it. O what an unspeakable happiness is it to pass through this world daily, without the fear of dying? What is it that makes life so bitter to multitudes of souls, and every malady or accident so frightful to them, but the perpetual terrors of death? Think what a divine satisfaction it is to walk up and down in this desert land, ready prepared for an entrance into the land of promise, *the inheritance of the saints in light:* Think of the solid joy and inward consolation of those souls who feel in themselves an habitual readiness for a departure hence, and who are wrought up by divine grace to a preparation for the business and the joys above. Think of the victory over death, which is obtained by such a readiness for heaven, and how glorious a thing it is to meet that *last enemy the king of terrors*, and encounter him without fear and to triumph over him with divine language, *O death! where is thy sting?* 1 Cor. xv. 55. How joyful a scene would it be to take leave of all our friends in this land of mortality, with an assured hope that we are entering into a happier climate, and a better country, ready prepared for all the more glorious scenes that shall meet us in the invisible world?

It is an amazing thing to me, how the children of men, who are dying daily off from this stage of life, who must all shortly die, and enter into a world of eternal futurity, should be no more concerned about a preparation for their departure hence: That they should be so stupidly thoughtless of a world to come, while they are on the very borders of it, and eternal joy or eternal sorrow depends on this one question, "Am I prepared for heaven, or not?" O those two awful regions of the unseen world; where the love of God shines with its brightest glories, or where the vengeance of God is discovered in all its anguish and horror! One of these will be the certain and eternal dwelling-place of the souls that are prepared for them, and there must they pass their long immortality, either in joy, or in sorrow, without a change; and yet the foolish and besotted tribes of mankind seem to have abandoned all thought and concern about them. A dangerous lethargy, or distraction!

What shall we do to cure sinners of this madness? Shall I try to rouse these indolent unthinking wretches out of their dangerous and mortal slumbers with the loudest voice of thunder and divine terror? But the lethargy of sin is proof against all these terrors and thunders. Shall I call for *a fountain of tears* into my eyes, and weep over them with the tenderest sympathy and compassion? But they feel not any meltings of pity for themselves, nor are their hearts to be softened by all our tears and wailings. Shall I beseech them in the name of Christ by the bowels of his dying love, and the blood and anguish of his sufferings for our salvation? But even these divine and astonishing instances of tenderness and mercy make no impression on their souls. While Satan holds them in his chains, they are sleeping *the sleep of death.* O for a word of sovereign and almighty grace to reach the centre of their spirits! To shake all the powers of their nature! To awaken them to behold their eternal interest! and to prepare for heavenly felicity! Awake, O sleepers, ere the angel of death seize you, *and the grave shut its mouth upon you;* then all your seasons and hopes of mercy are cut off for ever, and you will awake hopeless immortals.

I shall conclude this discourse with one word of exhortation to those who are in any measure wrought up to a preparation for the heavenly blessedness. "O happy creatures! whatsoever pains you have taken, whatever conflicts you have endured in the matter of your own salvation, yet let God and his grace have all the honour of this work. It is to God you owe your sacrifices of praise. *He that hath wrought you* up for this felicity is God. It was he who awakened you first, and set you a thinking of your most important concerns: It was he that led you first into the way of salvation by Jesus Christ his Son, and hath thus far crowned your labours and your prayers with success and blessing. Every stumbling-block in your way might have thrown you down to perdition: Every temptation might have turned you back from this glorious pursuit: Every enemy of your souls might have discouraged or overcome you, if God and his grace had not been engaged on your side.

It is he hath upheld you when you were falling, he hath taken you by the hand and led you right onward when you were wandering, and he hath supported you by his divine cordials of promise when you were fainting. It is God who hath enabled you to maintain your conflict with all the mighty obstacles of your faith and hope; it is his grace hath renewed your nature, hath weaned you from this vain flattering world, and given you a sacred relish of divine blessedness. It is he who hath formed you again *after his own image,* and hath trained you up, and made you *meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.* Call up all your powers to praise his goodness, and say, *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name: Bless the Lord for ever, and forget not all his benefits;* Psal. ciii. 1, 2. It is God who hath *called me out of darkness into his marvellous light,* and given me to see *the things that belong to my everlasting peace.* It is God who washed away my iniquities in the blood of his own Son, and hath renewed me unto holiness by his blessed Spirit. It is God who hath taken me out of the family of sin and Satan, and given me a place among his children; who hath begun to prepare me for the joys and blessings of heaven, and in his own time he will fulfil all my hopes, and complete my felicity. Walk before him with all holy care and watchfulness, and *take heed that you lose not the things which you have wrought,* nor the things which God has wrought in you, but that persevering to the end you may receive the full reward, and obtain the crown of evrlasting life; 2 *John,* verse 8. *Amen.*

DISCOURSE IX.

NO PAIN AMONG THE BLESSED.

REV. XXI. 4.

NEITHER SHALL THERE BE ANY MORE PAIN.

THERE have been some divines in ancient times, as well as in our present age, who suppose this prophecy relates to some glorious and happy event here on earth, wherein the saints and faithful followers of Christ shall be delivered from the bondage and miseries to which they have been exposed in all former ages, and shall enjoy the blessings which these words promise. Among these writers, some have placed this happy state before the resurrection of the body; others make it to belong to that *first resurrection* which is spoken of in *Rev.* xx. 6. But let this prophecy have a particular aspect upon what earthly period soever, yet all must grant it is certainly true concerning the heavenly state; from whose felicities, taken in the literal sense, these figurative expressions are derived, to foretel the happiness of any period of the church in this world; and in this sense, as part of our happiness in heaven, I shall understand the words here, and propose them as the foundation of my present discourse.

Among the many things that make this life uncomfortable, and render mankind unhappy here below, this is one that has a large influence, namely, that in this mortal state we are all liable to pain, from which we shall be perfectly delivered in the life to come. The greek word which is here translated pain, signifies also toil and fatigue and excessive labour of the body, as well as anguish and vexation of the spirit: But since in the two other places of the New Testament where it is used, the word more properly signifies the pain of the body, I presume to understand it chiefly in this sense also in my text.

I need not spend time in explaining what pain is, to persons who dwell in flesh and blood: There is not one of you in this assembly but is better acquainted with the nature of it by the sense of feeling, than it is possible for the wisest philosopher to inform you by all his learned language. Yet that I may proceed regularly, I would just give you this short description of it. "Pain is an uneasy perception of the soul, occasioned by some indisposition of the body to which it is united;" whether this arise from some disorder or malady in the flesh itself, or from some injury received from without by wounds, bruises, or any thing of the like kind. Now this sort of uneasy sensations is not to be found or feared in heaven.

In order to make our present meditations on this part of the blessedness of heaven useful and joyful to us while we are here on earth, let us enquire:

I. What are the evils or grand inconveniences that generally flow from the pains we suffer here; and as we go we shall survey the satisfactions which arise by our freedom from them all in heaven.

II. What just and convincing proofs may be given that there are no such uneasy sensations to be felt in heaven, or to be feared after this life.

III. What are the chief reasons or designs of the blessed God in sending pain on his creatures in this world; and at the same time I shall shew that pain is banished from the heavenly state, because God has no such designs remaining to be accomplished in that world.

IV. What lessons we may learn from the painful discipline which we feel while we are here, in order to shew there is no need of such discipline to teach us those lessons in heaven. Let us address ourselves to make these four enquiries in their order.

Section I.—First. "What are the evils which flow from pain, and usually attend it in this life; and all along as we go we shall take a short view of the heavenly state, where we shall be released from all these evils and inconveniences."

1. "Pain has a natural tendency to make the mind sorrowful as well as the body uneasy." Our souls are so nearly united to flesh and blood, that it is not possible for the mind to possess perfect happiness and ease, while the body is exposed to so many occasions of pain. It is granted, that natural courage and strength of heart may prevail in some persons to bear up their spirits under long and intense pains of the flesh; yet they really take away so much of the ease and pleasure of life, while any of us lie under the acute sensations of them. Pain will make us confess that we are flesh and blood, and force us sometimes to cry out and groan. Even a stoic, in spite of all the pride of his philosophy, will sometimes be forced, by a sigh or a groan, to confess himself a man. What are the greatest parts of the groans and outcries, that are heard all round this our globe of earth, but the effects of pain, either felt or feared?

But in heaven, where there is no pain, there shall be no sighing or groaning, *nor any more crying*, as my text expresses. There shall be nothing to make the flesh or the spirit uneasy, and to break the eternal thread of peace and pleasure that runs through the whole duration of the saints: Not one painful moment to interrupt the everlasting felicity of that state. When we have done with earth and mortality, we have done also with sickness and anguish of nature, and with all sorrow and vexation for ever. There are no groans in the heavenly world to break in upon the harmony of the harps and the songs of the blessed; no sighs, no outcries, no anguish there to disturb the music and the joy of the inhabitants. And though the soul shall be united to the body new-raised from the dead, to dwell for ever in union, yet that new-raised body shall have neither any springs of pain in it, nor be capable of giving anguish or uneasiness to the indwelling spirit for ever.

2. Another evil which attends on pain is this, that "it so indisposes our nature, as often to unfit us for the businesses and duties of the present state." With how much coldness and indifference do we go about our daily work, and perform it too with many interruptions, when nature is burdened with continual pain, and the vital springs of action are overborne with perpetual uneasiness? What a listlessness do we find to many of the duties of religion at such a season, unless it be to run more frequently to the throne of God, and pour out our groanings and our complaints there? Groanings and cries are the language of nature, and the children of God address themselves in this language to their heavenly Father: Blessed be the name of our gracious God, who hears every secret sigh, who is acquainted with the sense of every groan, while we mourn before him, and

make our complaints to him, that we cannot worship him, nor work for him as we would do, because of the anguish and maladies of nature.

And what an indisposition and backwardness do we feel in ourselves to fulfil many of the duties towards our fellow-creatures, while we ourselves are under present smart and anguish? Pain will so sensibly affect self, as to draw off all our thoughts thither, and centre them there, that we cannot so much employ our cares and our active powers for the benefit of our neighbours: It abates our concern for our friends, and while it awakens the spirit within us into keen sensations, it takes away the activity of the man that feels it from almost all the services of human life. When human nature bears so much, it can act but little.

But what a blessed state will that be, when we shall never feel this indispostion to duties, either human or divine, through any uneasiness of the body? When we shall never more be subject to any of these painful impediments, but for ever cast off all those clogs and burdens which fetter the active powers of the soul. Then we shall be joyfully employed in such unknown and glorious services to God our Father, and to the blessed Jesus, as require much superior capacities to what we here possess, and shall find no weakness, no weariness, no pain throughout all the years of our immortality; *Rev.* vii. 15. None of the blessed above are at rest or idle, either day or night, but *they serve him in his temple*, and never cease. And chap. iv. 8. no faintness, no languors are known there. *The inhabitants of that land shall not say, I am sick:* Everlasting vigour, cheerfulness, and ease shall render every blessed soul for ever zealous and active in obedience, as the angels are in heaven.

3. "Pain unfits us for the enjoyments of life, as well as for the labours and duties of it." It takes away all the pleasing satisfactions which might attend our circumstances, and renders the objects of them insipid and unrelishing. What pleasure can a rich man take in all the affluence of earthly blessings around him, while some painful distemper holds him upon the rack, and distresses him with the torture? How little delight can he find in meats or in drinks which are prepared for luxury, when sharp pain calls all his attention to the diseased part? What joy can he find in magnificent buildings, in gay and shining furniture, in elegant gardens, or in all the glittering treasures of the Indies, when the gout torments his hands and his feet, or the rheumatism afflicts his limbs with intense anguish? If pain attacks any part of the body, and rises to a high degree, the luxuries of life grow tasteless, and life itself is embittered to us: Or when pains less acute are prolonged through weeks and months, and perhaps stick in our flesh all the night, as well as in the day, how vain and feeble are all the efforts of the bright and gay things around us, to raise the soul into cheerfulness: Therefore, Solomon calls old age *the years wherein there is no pleasure;* Eccles. xii. 1. because so many aches and ails in that season pursue us in a continual succession; so many infirmities and painful hours attend us usually in that stage of life, even in the best situation that mortality can boast of, as cuts off and destroys all our pleasures.

But oh what a wondrous, what a joyful change shall that be, when the soul is commanded to forsake this flesh and blood, when it rises as on the wings of angels to the heavenly world, and leaves every pain behind it, together with the body in the arms of death? And what a more illustrious and delightful change shall we meet in the great rising day, when our bodies shall start up out of the dust with vigorous immortality, and without any spring or seat of pain? All the unknown enjoyments with which heaven is

furnished, shall be taken in by the enlarged powers of the soul with intense pleasure, and not a moment's pain shall ever interrupt them.

4. Another inconvenience and evil which belongs to pain is, that "it makes time and life itself appear tedious and tiresome, and adds a new burden to all other grievances." Many evidences of this truth are scattered throughout all nature, and on all sides of this globe. There is not one age of mankind but can furnish us with millions of instances. In what melancholy language does Job discover his sensations of the tiresome nature of pain? *I am made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me: When I lie down I say, when shall I rise and the night be gone? And I am full of tossing to and fro unto the dawning of the day;* Job vii. 3, 4. When pain takes hold of our flesh, it seems to stretch the measures of time to a tedious length: We cry out as Moses expresses it, Deut. xxviii. 67. *In the morning we say, would to God it were evening; and at* the return of the *evening we say again, would to God it were morning.*

Long are those hours indeed, whether of daylight or darkness, wherein there is no relief or intermission of acute pain. How tiresome a thing is it to count the clock at midnight in long successions, and to wait every hour for the distant approach of morning, while our eyes are unable to close themselves in slumber, and our anguish admits not the common refuge of sleep. There are multitudes among the race of mortals, who have known these truths by sore experience. Blessed be God that we do not always feel them! But when we turn our thoughts to the heavenly world, where there is no pain, there we shall find no wearisome hours, no tedious days, though eternity, with all its unmeasurable lengths of duration, lies before us. What a dismal thought is eternal pain! The very mention of it makes nature shudder and stand aghast; but futurity, with all its endless years, in a land of peace and pleasure, gives the soul the most delightful prospect, for there is no shadow of uneasiness in that state to render our abode there tiresome, or to think the ages of it long.

5. Another evil that belongs to pain is, that "it has an unhappy tendency to ruffle the passions, and to render us fretful and peevish within ourselves, as well as towards those who are round about us." Even the kindest and the tenderest hand that ministers to our relief, can hardly secure itself from the peevish quarrels of a man in extreme pain. Not that we are to suppose that this peevish humour, this fretfulness of spirit, are thereby made innocent, and perfectly excused: No, by no means; but it must be acknowledged still, that continuance in pain is too ready to work up the spirit into frequent disquietude and eagerness: We are tempted to fret at every thing, we quarrel with every thing, we grow impatient under every delay, angry with our best friends, sharp and sudden in our resentments, with wrathful speeches breaking out of our lips.

This peevish humour in a day of pain is so common a fault, that I fear it is too much excused and indulged. Let me rather say with myself, "My God is now putting me to the trial what sort of christian I am, and how much I have learned of self-government, and through his grace I will subdue my uneasy passions, though I cannot relieve my pain." Oh, it is a noble point of honour gained in a sick chamber, or on a bed of anguish, to lie pressed with extreme pain, and yet maintain a serenity and calmness of soul; to be all meekness, and gentleness, and patience, among our friends or attendants, under the sharp twinges of it; to utter no rude or angry language, and to take every thing *kindly that they say or do, and become like a weaned child;* Psalm cxxxi. 2. But

such a character is not found in every house. A holy soul, through the severity of pain, may sometimes in such an hour be too much ruffled by violent and sudden fits of impatience. This proceeded to such a degree even in that good man Job, under his various calamities and the sore boils upon his flesh, that made him *curse the day wherein he was born*, and cry out in the anguish of his spirit, *my soul chooseth strangling and death rather than life;* Job iii. 1—10. and vii. 15. and there have been several instances of those who, having not the fear of God before their eyes, with hasty violence and murderous hands have put an end to their own lives, through their wild and sinful impatience of constant pain.

But these trials are for ever finished when this life expires: Then all our pains are ended for ever, if we are found among the children of God. There is not, nor can be any temptation in heaven to fretfulness or disquietude of mind: All the peevish passions are dropped into the grave, together with the body of flesh; and those evil humours, which were the sources of smart and anguish here on earth, have no place in the new-raised body: Those irregular juices of animal nature, which tormented the nerves and excited pain in the flesh, and which at the same time provoked choler and irritated the spirit, are never found in the heavenly mansions. There is nothing but peace and pleasure, joy and love, goodness and benevolence, ease and satisfaction, diffused through all the regions on high: There are no inward springs of uneasiness to ruffle the mind, none of those fretful ferments which were wont to kindle in the mortal body, and explode themselves with fire and thunder upon every supposed offence, or even sometimes without provocation. O happy state and blessed mansions of the saints, when this *body of sin shall be destroyed*, and all the restless atoms that disquieted the flesh and provoked the spirit to impatience, shall be buried in the dust of death, and never, never rise again!

6. "Pain carries a temptation with it sometimes to repine and murmur at the providence of God." Not fellow-creatures alone, but even our sovereign Creator, comes within the reach of the peevish humours, which are alarmed and roused by sharp or continual pain. Jonah the prophet, when he felt the sultry heat of the sun smite fiercely upon him, and the gourd which gave him a friendly shadow was withered away, he told God himself in a passion, that *he did well to be angry, even unto death;* Jonah iv. 9. And even the man of Uz, the pattern of patience, was sometimes transported with the smart and maladies that were upon him, so that he complained against God, as well as complained to him, and used some very unbecoming expressions toward his Maker. When we are under the smarting rebukes of providence, we are ready to compare ourselves with others who are in peace, and then the envious and the murmuring humour breaks out into rebellious language, "Why am I thus afflicted more than others? *Why hast thou set me as a mark for thy arrows? Why dost thou not let loose thy hand, and cut me off* from the earth?"

But in heaven there is a glorious reverse of all such unhappy scenes: There is no pain nor any temptation to murmur at the dealings of the Almighty: There is nothing that can incline us to think hardly of God: The days of chastisement are for ever ended, and painful discipline shall be used no more. We shall live for ever in the embraces of the love of God, and he shall be the object of our everlasting praise. Perfect felicity, without the interruption of one uneasy thought, for ever forbids the inhabitants of that world to repine at their situation under the eternal smiles of that blessed Being that made them.

7. To add no more, "Pain and anguish of the flesh have sometimes prevailed so far,

as to distract the mind, as well as destroy the body." It has overpowered all the reasoning faculties of man; it has destroyed natural life, and brought it down to the grave: The senses have been confounded, and the understanding overwhelmed with severe and racking pain, especially where there hath been an impatient temper to contest with them. Extreme smart of the flesh distresses feeble nature, and turns the whole frame of it upside down in wild confusion: It has actually worn out this animal frame, and stopped all the springs of vital motion. The gout and the stone have brought death upon the patient in this manner; and a dreadful manner of dying it is, to have breath, and life, and nature, quite oppressed and destroyed with intense and painful sensations. But when we survey the mansions of the heavenly world, we shall find none of these evils there: No danger of any such events as these; *for there is no pain, no sorrow, no crying, no death* nor destruction *there.* The mind shall be for ever clear and serene in the ease and happiness of the separate state: And when the body shall be raised again, that glorified body, as was intimated a little before, shall have none of the seeds of distemper in it, no ferments that can rack the nerves, or create anguish; no fever, or gout, or stone, was ever known in that country; no head-ach or heart-ach have ascended thither.

That body also shall be capable of no outward wounds nor bruises, for it is raised only for happiness, and leaves all the causes of pain behind it. It is a body made for immortality and pleasure; there the sickly christian is delivered from all the maladies of the flesh, and the twinges of acute pain, which made him groan here on earth night and day. There the martyrs of the religion of Jesus, and all the holy confessors, are free from their cruel tormentors, those surly executioners of heathen fury, or antichristian wrath: They are for ever released from racks, and wheels, and fires, and every engine of torture and smart. Immortal ease, and unfading health and cheerfulness, run through their eternal state, and all the powers of the man are composed for the most regular exercises of devotion and divine joy. Thus I have endeavoured briefly to set the different states of heaven and earth before you under this distinguishing character, that "all the tempting, the distressing, and mischievous attendants and consequences of pain," to which we are exposed in our mortal life, are for ever banished from the heavenly world.

Section II. The second general enquiry was this, "What just and convincing arguments or proofs can be given, that there are no pains or uneasy sensations to be felt by the saints in a future state, nor to be feared after this life?" My answers to this question shall be very few, because I think the thing must be sufficiently evident to those who believe the New Testament, and have liberty to read it.

Argument I. "God has assured us so in his word, that there is no pain for holy souls to endure in the world to come." My text may be esteemed a sufficient proof of it; for whatsoever particular event or period of the church on earth this prophecy may refer to, yet the description is borrowed from the blessedness of heaven; and if there shall be any such state on earth, much more will it be so in the heavenly world, whereof that period on earth is but a shadow and emblem. We are expressly told, *Rev.* xiv. 13. in order to encourage the persecuted saints and martyrs, *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, from henceforth, for they rest from their labours,* or pains, *and their works follow them;* that is, in a way of gracious recompence.

It is granted indeed by the papists themselves, that in heaven there is no pain; yet they suppose there are many and grievous pains for the soul to undergo in a place called purgatory, after the death of the body, before it arrives at heaven. But give me leave

to ask, does not St. Paul express himself with confidence concerning himself and his fellow-christians—" that they shall be *present with the Lord* when they are *absent from the body?*" 2 Cor. v. 8. Surely, the state wherein Christ our Lord dwells after all his sufferings and agonies, is a state of everlasting ease without suffering; and shall not his followers dwell with him? Do we not read in the parable of our Saviour, *Luke* xvi. 22. that " Lazarus was no sooner dead, but his soul *was carried by angels into the bosom of Abraham,* or paradise? Every holy soul, wherein the work of grace is begun, and sin hath received its mortal wound, is perfectly sanctified when it is released from this body; and it puts off the body of sin and the body of flesh together, *for nothing that defileth must enter into paradise,* or the heavenly state; *Rev.* xxi. 27.

The word of God has appointed but two states, *viz.* heaven and hell, for the reception of all mankind when they depart from this world: And how vain a thing must it be for men to invent a third state, and make a purgatory of it? This is a building erected by the church of Rome between heaven and hell, and prepared by their wild imagination for souls of imperfect virtue, to be tormented there, with pains equal to those of hell, but of shorter duration. This state of fiery purgation, and extreme anguish, is devised by that mother of lies, partly under a pretence of completing the penances and satisfactions for the sins of men committed in this life, and partly also to purify and refine their souls from all the remaining dregs of sin, and to fill up their virtues to perfection, that they may be fit for the immediate presence of God. But does not the scripture sufficiently inform us, that the atonement or satisfaction of Christ for sin is full and complete in itself, and needs none of our additions in this world or another? Does not the apostle John tell us, 1 John i. 7. *The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin?* Nor shall the saints after this life sin any more, to require any new atonement; nor do they carry the seeds of sin to heaven with them, but drop them together with the flesh, and all the sources of pain together: Now since neither Christ nor his apostles give us any intimation of such a place as purgatory, for the refinement or purification of souls after this life, we have no ground to hearken to such a fable.

II. " God has not provided any medium to convey pain to holy souls after they have dropped this body of flesh." They are pardoned, they are sanctified, they are accepted of God for ever; and since they are in no danger of sinning afresh by the influences of corrupt flesh and blood, therefore they are in no fear of suffering any thing thereby. And if, as some divines have supposed, there should be any pure ethereal bodies or vehicles provided for holy separate spirits, when departed from this grosser tabernacle of flesh and blood, yet it cannot be supposed that the God of all grace would mix up any seeds of pain with that ethereal matter, which is to be the occasional habitation of sanctified spirits in that state, nor that he would make any avenues or doors of entrance for pain into these refined vehicles, when the state of their sinning and their trial is for ever finished.

Nor will the body at the final resurrection of the saints, be made for a medium of any painful sensations. All the pains of nature are ended, when the first union between flesh and spirit is dissolved. When this body lies down to sleep in the dust, it shall never awake again with any of the principles of sin or pain in it: *Though it be sown in weakness, it is raised in power:* though *it be sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory;* 1 Cor. xv. 43. and we shall be made like the Son of God, without sorrow and without sin for ever.

III. "There are no moral causes or reasons why there should be any thing of pain provided for the heavenly state." And if there be no moral reasons for it, surely God will not provide pain for his creatures without reason! But this thought leads me to the next general head of my discourse.

Section III. The third general enquiry which I proposed to make was this, "What may be the chief moral reasons, motives, or designs of the blessed God, in sending pain on his creatures here below; and at the same time I shall shew, that these designs and purposes of God are finished, and they have no place in heaven."

1. Then, "Pain is sometimes sent into our natures, to awaken slothful and drowsy christians out of their spiritual slumbers, or to rouse stupid sinners from a state of spiritual death." Intense and sharp pain of the flesh has oftentimes been the appointed and effectual means of providence to attain these desirable ends.

Pain is like a rod in the hand of God, wherewith he smites sinners *that are dead in their trespasses*, and his Spirit joins with it to awaken them into spiritual life. This rod is sometimes so smarting and severe, that it will make a senseless and ungodly wretch look upwards to the hand that smites, and take notice of the rebuke of heaven, though all the thundering and lightning of the word, and all the terrors of hell denounced there, could not awaken them. Acute pain is also a common instrument in our heavenly Father's hand, to recover backsliding saints from their secure and drowsy frames of spirit. David often found it so, and speaks it plainly in *Psalms* xxxviii. and xxxix. and in *Psalm* cxix. 67. he confesses, *before I was afflicted, I went astray;* but when he had felt the scourge, he learned to obey, and to keep the word of his God.

But there is no need of this discipline in heaven; no need of this smarting scourge, to make dead sinners feel their Maker's hand, in order to rouse them into life, for there are no such inhabitants in that world: Nor is there any need of such divine and paternal discipline of God in those holy mansions, where there is no drowsy christian to be awakened, no wandering spirit that wants to be reduced to duty: And where the designs of such smarting strokes have no place, pain itself must be for ever banished; for *God does not willingly afflict, nor take delight in grieving the children of men*, without substantial reasons for it; *Lam.* iii. 33.

2. Another use of bodily pain and anguish in this world is, "to punish men for their faults and follies, to make them know *what an evil and bitter thing it is to sin against God*, and thereby to guard them against new temptations; Jer. ii. 19. *Thy own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee;* that is, by means of the smarting chastisements they bring upon men. When God makes the sinner *taste of the fruit of his own ways*, he makes others also observe how hateful a thing every sin is in the sight of God, which he thinks fit so terribly to punish.

This is one general reason why special diseases, maladies, and plagues, are spread over a whole nation, *viz.* to punish the sins of the inhabitants, when they have provoked God by public and spreading iniquities. War and famine, with all their terrible train of anguish and agony, and the dying pains which they diffuse over a kingdom, are rods of punishment in the hand of God, the governor of the world, to declare from heaven and earth his indignation against an ungodly and an unrighteous age.

This indeed is one design of the pains and torments of hell, where God inflicts pain without intermission: And this is sometimes the purpose of God in his painful providences here on earth: Shall I rise yet higher and say, that this was one great design in the eye

of God, *when it pleased the Father to bruise* his best beloved Son, *and put him* under the impressions of extreme pain; *Isaiah* liii. 10. *viz.* to discover to the world the abominable evil that was in sin? While Jesus stood in the stead of sinners, then *his soul was exceeding sorrowful even to death, and he sweat drops of blood;* Luke xxii. 44. under the pressure of his agonies, to let the world see what the sin of man had deserved: And sometimes God smites his own children in this world with smarting strokes of correction, when they have indulged any iniquity, to shew the world that God hates sin in his own people wheresoever he finds it, and to bring his children back again to the paths of righteousness.

But "in the heavenly state there are no faults to punish, no follies to chastise." Jesus, our surety in the days of his flesh, has suffered those sorrows which made atonement for sin, and that anguish of his holy soul, and the blood of his cross, have satisfied the demands of God; so that with honour he can pardon ten thousand penitent criminals, and provide an inheritance of ease and blessedness for them for ever. When once we are dismissed from this body, the spirit is thoroughly sanctified, and there is no fire of purgatory needful to burn out the remains of sin: Those foolish invented flames are but false fire, kindled by the priests of Rome to fright the souls of the dying, and to squeeze money out of them to purchase so many vain and idle masses to relieve the souls of the dead. Upon our actual release from this flesh and blood, neither the guilt nor the power of sin shall attend the saints in their flight to heaven: All the spirits that arrive there are *made perfect* in holiness without new scourges, and commence a state of felicity that shall never be interrupted.

3. God has appointed pain in this world, "to exercise and try the virtues and the graces of his people." As gold is thrown into the fire to prove and try how pure it is from any coarse alloy, so the children of God are sometimes left for a season in the furnace of sufferings, partly to refine them from their dross, and partly to discover their purity and their substantial weight and worth.

Sometimes "God lays smarting pain with his own hand" on the flesh of his people, on purpose to try their graces: When we endure the pain without murmuring at providence, then it is we come off conquerors. Christian submission and silence under the hand of God is one way to victory. *I was dumb,* says David, *and opened not my mouth, because thou didst it;* Psalm xxxix. 9. Our love to God, our resignation to his will, our holy fortitude and our patience find a proper trial in such smarting seasons. Perhaps when some severe pain first seizes and surprises us, we find ourselves *like a wild bull in a net,* and all the powers of nature are thrown into tumult and disquietude, so that we have no possession of our own spirits; but when the hand of God has continued us awhile under this divine discipline, we learn to bow down to his sovereignty, we lie at his footstool calm and composed: He brings our haughty and reluctant spirits down to his foot, and makes us lie humble in the dust, and we wait with patience the hour of his release. Rom. v. 3, 4. *Tribulation worketh patience, and patience* under tribulation gives us *experience* of the dealings of God with his people, and makes our way to a confirmed hope in his love. The evidence of our various graces grows brighter and stronger under a smarting rod, till we are settled in a joyful confidence, and the soul rests in God himself. Sometimes he has permitted evil angels to put the flesh to pain, for the trial of his children; so Job was smitten *with sore boils from head to foot* by the malice of Satan, at the permission of God; but *he knows the way that I take, says this holy man, and when*

he has tried me I shall come forth as gold; for my foot hath held his steps, through all these trials, *neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips;* Job xxiii. 10—12.

At other times "he suffers wicked men to spend their own malice, and to inflict dreadful pains on his own children:" Look back to the years of ancient persecution in the land of Israel, under jewish or heathen tyrants; review the annals of Great Britain; look over the seas into popish kingdoms; take a view of the cursed courts of inquisition in Spain, Portugal, and Italy; behold the weapons, the scourges, the racks, the machines of torture and engines of cruelty, devised by the barbarous and inhuman wit of men, to constrain the saints to renounce their faith, and dishonour their Saviour. See the slow fires where the martyrs have been roasted to death with lingering torment: These are seasons of terrible trial indeed, whereby the malice of Satan and antichrist would force the servants of God, and the followers of the Lamb, into sinful compliances with their idolatry, or a desertion of their post of duty: But the Spirit of God has supported his children to bear a glorious testimony to *pure and undefiled religion;* and they have seemed to mock the rage of their tormentors, to defy all the stings of pain, and triumphed over all their vain attempts, to compel them to sin against their God.

One would sometimes be ready to wonder, that a God of infinite mercy and compassion should suffer his own dear children to be tried in so terrible a manner as this; but unsearchable wisdom is with him, and he does not give an account to men of all the reasons and the rules of his conduct. This has been his method of providence with his saints at special seasons, under the jewish and the christian dispensations, and perhaps under all the dispensations of God to men, from the days of Cain and Abel to the present hour. Our blessed Lord has given us many warnings of it in his word by his own mouth, and by all his three apostles, Paul, Peter, and John: *They that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution;* 2 Tim. iii. 12. *Think it not strange therefore concerning the fiery trial;* 1 Peter iv. 12. *The devil,* by his wicked agents, *shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days, but fear none of the things which thou shalt suffer: Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life;* Rev. ii. 10.

But blessed be God, that this world is the only state of such trials. As soon as the state of probation is finished, the state of recompence begins. Such hard and painful exercises to try the virtues of the saints, have no place in that world which was not made for a stage of trial and conflict, but a palace of glorious reward. "Heaven is the place where crowns and prizes are distributed to all those blessed ones *who have endured temptation,*" and who have been found *faithful to the death.* These sharp and dreadful combats with pain have no place among conquerors, who have finished their warfare, and have begun their triumph.

4. "Pain is sent us by the hand of providence to teach us many a lesson both of truth and duty, which perhaps we should never have learned so well without it." This sharp sensation awakens our best powers to attend to those truths and duties which we took less notice of before: In the time of perfect ease we are ready to let them lie neglected or forgotten, till God our great master takes his rod in hand for our instruction.

Section IV.—And this leads me to the fourth general head of my discourse, and that is, to enquire what are those spiritual lessons which may be learned on earth, from the pains we have suffered, or may suffer in the flesh. I shall divide them into two sorts, *viz.* Lessons of instruction in useful truths, and lessons of duty, or practical chris-

tianity; and there are many of each kind with which the disciples of Christ in this world may be better acquainted by the actual sensations of pain, than any other way. In this world I say, and in this only; for in heaven most of these lessons of doctrine and practice are utterly needless to be taught, either because they have been so perfectly well known to all its inhabitants before, and their present situation makes it impossible to forget them; or they shall be let into the fuller knowledge of them in heaven in a far superior way of instruction, and without any such uneasy discipline. And this I shall evidently make appear when I have first enumerated all these general lessons both of truth and duty, and shewn how wisely the great God has appointed them to be taught here on earth, under the scourge and the wholesome discipline of pain in the flesh.

I. "The lessons of instruction here on earth, or the useful truths," are such as these:

1. Pain teaches us feelingly "what feeble creatures we are, and how entirely dependent on God our Maker for every hour and moment of ease." We are naturally wild and wanton creatures, and especially in the season of youth, our gayer powers are gadding abroad at the call of every temptation; but when God sends *his arrows into our flesh*, he arrests us on a sudden, and teaches us that we are but men, poor feeble dying creatures, soon crushed, and sinking under his hand. We are ready to exult in the vigour of youth, when animal nature in its prime of strength and glory, raises our pride, and supports us in a sort of self-sufficiency; we are so vain and foolish as to imagine nothing can hurt us: But when the pain of a little nerve seizes us, and we feel the acute twinges of it, we are made to confess that our *flesh is not iron, nor our bones brass;* that we are by no means the lords of ourselves, or sovereigns over our own nature: We cannot remove the least degree of pain, till the Lord who sent it takes off his hand and commands the smart to cease. If the torture fix itself but in a finger or a toe, or in the little nerve of a tooth, what intense agonies may it create in us, and that beyond all the relief of medicines, till the moment wherein God shall give us ease. This lesson of the frailty of human nature must be some time written upon our hearts in deep and smarting characters, by intense pain, before we have learned it well; and this gives us for time to come, a happy guard against our pride and vanity. *Psalm* xxxix. 10. When David felt the stroke of the hand of God upon him, and corrected him with sharp rebukes for his iniquity, he makes an humble address to God and acknowledges that his "beauty, and all the boasted excellencies of flesh and blood, *consume away like a moth; surely every man is vanity!*" Psalm xxxix. 10, 11.

2. The next useful truth in which pain instructs us, is "the great evil that is contained in the nature of sin, because it is the occasion of such intense pain and misery to human nature." I grant, I have hinted this before, but I would have it more powerfully impressed upon our spirits, and therefore I introduce it here again in this part of my discourse, as a spiritual lesson, which we learn under the discipline of our heavenly Father.

It is true indeed that innocent nature was made capable of pain in the first Adam, and the innocent nature of the man Jesus Christ suffered acute pain, when he came in the likeness of sinful flesh: But if Adam had continued in his state of innocence, it is a great question with me, whether he or his children would have actually tasted or felt what acute pain is; I mean such pain as we now suffer, such as makes us so far unhappy, and such as we cannot immediately relieve. It may be granted that natural hunger and

thirst, and weariness after labour, would have carried in them some degrees of pain or uneasiness, even in the state of innocence; but these are necessary to awaken nature to seek food and rest, and to put the man in mind to supply his natural wants; and man might have immediately relieved them himself, for the supplies of ease were at hand, and these sort of uneasinesses were abundantly compensated by the pleasure of rest and food, and perhaps they were in some measure necessary to make food and rest pleasant.

But surely if sin had never been known in our world, all the pain that arises from inward diseases of nature, or from outward violence, had been a stranger to the human race, an unknown evil among the sons of men, as it is among the holy angels, the sons of God. There had been no distempers or acute pains to meet young babes at their entrance into this world; no maladies to attend the sons and daughters of Adam through the journey of life; and they should have been translated to some higher and happier region without death and without pain.

It was the eating of the *tree of knowledge of good and evil*, that acquainted Adam and his offspring with the evil of pain. Or if pain could have attacked innocence in any form or degree, it would have been but in a way of trial to exercise and illustrate his virtues; and if he had endured the test, and continued innocent, I am satisfied he should never have felt any pain which was not overbalanced with superior pleasure, or abundantly recompensed by succeeding rewards and satisfactions.

Some persons indeed have supposed it within the reach of the sovereignty of God to afflict and torment a sinless creature: Yet I think it is hardly consistent with his goodness, or his equity, to constrain an innocent being, which has no sin, to suffer pain without his own consent, and without giving that creature equal or superior pleasure as a recompence. Both those were the case in the sufferings of our blessed Lord in his human nature, who was perfectly innocent: It was with his own consent that he gave himself up to be a sacrifice, when *it pleased the Father to bruise him and put him to grief;* Isaiah liii. 10. and God rewarded him with transcendent honours and joys after his passion, *he exalted him to his own right-hand and his throne, and gave him authority over all things.*

In general therefore, we have sufficient reason to say, that as *sin brought in death* into human nature, so it was sin that brought in pain also; and wheresoever there is any pain suffered among the sons and daughters of men, I am sure we may venture to assert boldly, that the sufferer may learn the evil of sin. Even the Son of God himself, when he suffered pain in his body as well as anguish in his spirit, has told us by his apostles, that our sins were the causes of it; *he bore our sins in his own body, on the tree, and for our iniquities he was bruised,* so says Isaiah the prophet; *Isaiah* liii. 5. and so speaks Peter the apostle; 1 *Peter* ii. 24.

And sometimes the providence of God is pleased to point out to us the particular sin we are guilty of by the special punishment which he inflicts. In *Psalm* cvii. 17, 18. *Fools are* said to be *afflicted*, that is, *with pain* and sickness, *because of their transgressions* of riot and intemperance; *their soul abhors all manner of meat, and they draw near to the gates of death.* Sickness and pain overbalance all the pleasures of luxury in meats and drinks, and make the epicure pay dear for the elegance of his palate, and the sweet relish of his morsels or his cups. The drunkard in his debauches is preparing some smarting pain for his own punishment. And let us all be so wise as to learn this lesson by the pains we feel, that sin which introduced them into the world is an abominable thing in

the sight of God, because it provokes him to use such smarting strokes of discipline in order to recover us from our folly, and to reduce us back again to the paths of righteousness.

"O blessed smart! O happy pain, that helps to soften the heart of a sinner, and melts it to receive divine instruction, which before was hard as iron, and attended to no divine counsel! We are ready to wander from God, and forget him amongst the months and years of ease and pleasure; but when the soul is melted in this furnace of painful sufferings, it more easily receives some divine stamp, some lasting impression of truth, which the words of the preacher and the book of God had before inculcated without success, and repeated almost in vain. Happy is the soul that learns this lesson thoroughly, and gains a more lasting acquaintance with the evil of sin and abhorrence of it, under the smarting stroke of the hand of God. *Blessed is the man whom thou correctest, O Lord, and teachest him the truths that are written in thy law;* Psalm xciv. 12.

3. Pain in the flesh teaches us also "how dreadfully the great God can punish sin and sinners when he pleases, in this world, or in the other." It is written in the song of Moses, the man of God; *Psalm* xc. 11. *According to thy fear, so is thy wrath,* that is, the displeasure and anger of the blessed God is as terrible as we can fear it to be; and he can inflict on us such intense pains and agonies, whose distressing smart we may learn by feeling a little of them. Unknown multiplications of racking pain, lengthened out beyond years and ages, is part of the description of hellish torments, and the other part lies in the bitter twinges of conscience, and keen remorse of soul for our past iniquities, but without all hope. Behold a man under a sharp fit of the gout or stone, which wrings the groans from his heart, and tears from his eye-lids; this is the hand of God in the present world, where there are many mixtures of divine goodness; but if ever we should be so wilfully unhappy as to be plunged into those regions where the almighty vengeance of God reigns, without one beam of divine light or love, this must be dreadful indeed. *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God;* Heb. x. 31. to be banished far off from all that is holy and happy, and to be confined to that dark dungeon, that place of torture, *where the gnawing worm* of conscience *never dies, and where the fire* of divine anger *is never quenched;* Mark ix. 43.

We who are made up of flesh and blood, and interwoven with many nerves and muscles, and membranes, may learn a little of the terrors of the Lord, if we reflect that every nerve, muscle, and membrane of the body is capable of giving us most sharp and painful sensations. We may be wounded in every sensible part of nature; smart and anguish may enter in at every pore, and make almost every atom of our constitution an instrument of our anguish. *Fearfully and wonderfully are we formed;* Psalm cxxxix. 14. indeed, capable of pain all over us; and if a God should see fit to punish sin to its full desert, and penetrate every atom of our nature with pain, what surprising and intolerable misery must that be? And if God should raise the wicked out of their graves to dwell in such sort of bodies again, on purpose to shew his just anger against sin in their punishment, how dreadful, beyond expression, must their anguish be through the long ages of eternity? God can form even such bodies for immortality, and can sustain them to endure everlasting agonies.

Let us think again, that when the hand of our Creator sends pain into our flesh, we cannot avoid it, we cannot fly from it, we carry it with us wheresoever we go: *His arrows stick fast in us,* and we cannot shake them off; oftentimes it appears that we can find

no relief from creatures: And if by the destruction of ourselves, that is, of these bodies, we plunge ourselves into the world of spirits at once, we shall find the same God of holiness and vengeance there, who can pierce our souls with unknown sorrows, equal if not superior to all that we felt in the flesh. *If I make my bed in the grave, Lord thou art there;* Psalm cxxxix. 6. thy hand of justice and punishment would find me out.

What a formidable thing it is to such creatures as we are, to have God our maker for our enemy? That God, who has all the tribes of pain and disease, and the innumerable host of maladies at his command! He fills the air in which we breathe with fevers and pestilences as often as he will: The gout and the stone arrest and seize us by his order, and stretch us upon a bed of pain: Rheumatisms and cholics come and go wheresoever he sends them, and execute his anger against criminals. He keeps in his hand all the various springs of pain, and every invisible rack that can torment the head or members, the bowels or the joints of man: He sets them at their dreadful work when and where he pleases. Let the sinner tremble at the name of his power and terror, who can fill both flesh and spirit with thrilling agonies; and yet he never punishes beyond what our iniquities deserve. How necessary is it for such sinful and guilty beings as we are, whose natures are capable of such constant and acute sensations of pain, to have the God of nature our friend and our reconciled God?

4. When we feel the acute pains of nature, we may learn something of the exceeding greatness of the love of Christ, even the Son of God, that glorious Spirit, who took upon him flesh and blood for our sakes, that he might be capable of pain and death though he had never sinned. He endured intense anguish to make atonement for our crimes. *Because the children* whom he came to save from misery *were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same,* that he might suffer in the flesh, and by his sufferings put away our sins; *Heb.* ii. 14. Happy was he in his Father's bosom, and the delight of his soul through many long ages before his incarnation: But he condescended to be born *in the likeness of sinful flesh,* that he might feel such smart and sorrows as our sins had exposed us to. His innocent and holy soul was incapable of such sort of sufferings till he put on this clothing of human nature, and became a surety for sinful perishing creatures.

Let us survey his sufferings a little. He was born to sorrow, and trained up through the common uneasy circumstances of the infant and childish state, till he grew up to man: What pains did attend him in hunger and thirst, and weariness, while he travelled on foot from city to city, through wilds and deserts, where there was no food nor rest? *The Son of man* sometimes wanted the common bread of nature, *nor had he where to lay his head.* What uneasy sensations was he exposed to, when he was *buffeted,* when he was *smitten on the cheek,* when his tender flesh was *scourged with whips,* and his temples were *crowned with thorns,* when his *hands and his feet* were barbarously torn with rude nails, and fastened to the cross, where the whole weight of his body hung on those wounds? And what man or angel can tell the inward anguish, when *his soul was exceeding sorrowful unto death,* and the conflicts and agonies of his spirit forced out the drops of bloody sweat through every pore. It was by the extreme torture of his nature that he was supposed to expire on the cross; these were the pangs of his atonement and agonies that expiated the sins of men.

"O blessed Jesus! what manner of sufferings were these? And what manner of love was it that willingly gave up thy sacred nature to sustain them? And what was the

design of them, but to deliver us from the wrath of God in hell, to save our flesh and spirit from eternal anguish and distress there? Why was he made such *a curse for us, but that he might redeem us from the curse of the law;* Gal. iii. 13. and the just punishment of our own iniquities?"

Let us carry our thoughts of his love and our benefit by it, yet one step farther: Was it not by these sorrows, and this painful passion, that he provided for us this very heaven of happiness, where we shall be for ever freed from all pain? Were they not all endured by him to procure a paradise of pleasure, a mansion of everlasting peace and joy for guilty creatures, who had merited everlasting pain? Was it not by these agonies in the mortal body which he assumed, that he purchased for each of us a glorified body, strong and immortal as his own when he rose from the dead, a body which has no seeds of disease or pain in it, no springs of mortality or death? May glory, honour and praise, with supreme pleasure, ever attend the sacred person of our Redeemer, whose sorrows and anguish of flesh and spirit were equal to our misery, and to his own compassion.

5. Another lesson which we are taught by the long and tiresome pains of nature, "is the value and worth of the word of God, and the sweetness of a promise, which can give the kindest relief to a painful hour, and soothe the anguish of nature." They teach us the excellency of the covenant of grace, which has sometimes strengthened the feeblest pieces of human nature to bear intense sufferings in the body, and which sanctifies them all to our advantage. Painful and tiresome maladies teach us to improve the promises to valuable purposes, and the promises take away half the smart of our pains by the sensations of divine love let into the soul. We read of philosophers and heroes in some ancient histories, who could endure pain by dint of reasoning, by a pride of their science, by an obstinacy of heart, or by natural courage; but a christian takes the word of a promise, and lies down upon it in the midst of intense pains of nature; and the pleasure of devotion supplies him with such ease, that all the reasonings of philosophy, all the courage of nature, all the anodynes of medicine, and soothing plaisters have attempted without success. When a child of God can read his Father's love in a promise, and by searching into the qualifications of his own soul, can lay faster hold of it by a living faith, the rage of his pain is much allayed, and made half easy. A promise is a sweet couch to rest a languishing body in the midst of pains, and a soft repose for the head or heart-ach.

The stoics pretended to give ease to pain, by persuading themselves there was no evil in it; as though the mere misnaming of things would destroy their nature: But the christian, by a sweet submission to the evil which his heavenly Father inflicts upon his flesh, reposes himself at the foot of God on the covenant of grace, and bears the wounds and the smart with much more serenity and honour. "It is my heavenly Father that scourges me, and I know he designs me no hurt, though he fills my flesh with present pain: His own presence, and the sense of his love, soften the anguish of all that I feel: He bids me not yield to fear, for *when I pass through the fires he will be with me;* and he that loved me and died for me, has suffered greater sorrows and more anguish on my account, than what he calls me to bear under the strokes of his wise and holy discipline: He has left his word with me as a universal medicine to relieve me under all my anguish, till he shall bring me to those mansions on high, where sorrows and pains are found no more."

6. Anguish and pain of nature here on earth teach us "the excellency and use of the

mercy-seat in heaven, and the admirable privilege of prayer." Even the sons of mere nature are ready to think of God at such a season; and they who never prayed before, *pour out a prayer before him when his chastening is upon them;* Isaiah xxvi. 16. An hour of twinging and tormenting pain, when creatures and medicines can give no relief, drives them to the throne of God to try whether he will relieve them or no. But much more delightful is it for a child of God that has been used to address the throne of grace, to run thither with pleasure and hope, and to spread all his anguish before the face of his heavenly Father. The blessed God has built this mercy-seat for his people to bring all their sorrows thither, and spread them before his eyes in all their smarting circumstances, and he has been often pleased to speak a word of relief.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, when he dwelt in flesh and blood, practised this part of religion with holy satisfaction and success. *Being in an agony he prayed more earnestly, and an angel was sent to strengthen* and comfort *him;* Luke xxii. 43, 44. This was the relief of holy David in ancient times; Psalm xxv. 18. *Look upon my affliction and my pain, and pardon all my sins.* Psalm cxvi. 3, 4. *The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell,* or the grave, *took hold of me; then called I upon the name of the Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.* And when he found a gracious answer to his request, he acknowledges the grace of God therein, and charges his soul to dwell near to God; *return to thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee: I was brought low, and he helped me, he delivered my soul from death, and my eyes from tears;* verses 6—8.

But we have stronger encouragement than David was acquainted with, since it is revealed to us, that we have a High-priest at this throne ready to bespeak all necessary relief for us there; Heb. ii. 18. *A High-priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities,* who has sustained the same sorrows and pains in the flesh, who can pity and relieve his people under their maladies and acutest anguish; *Heb.* iv. 15. When we groan and sigh under continued pains, they are ready to make nature weary and faint: We groan unto the Lord, who knows the language of our frailty: Our High-priest carries every groan to the mercy-seat: His compassion works towards his brethren, and he will suffer them to continue no longer under this discipline, than is necessary for their own best improvement and happiness.

O how much of this sort of consolation has many a christian learned and tasted, by a holy intercourse with heaven in such painful seasons? How much has he learned of the tender mercies of God the Father, and of the pity and sympathy of our great High-priest above? Who would be content to live in such a painful world as this is, without the pleasure and relief of prayer? Who would live without an interest at this mercy-seat, and without the supporting friendship of this Advocate at the throne?

Thus I have run over the chief lessons of instruction or doctrine, which may be derived from our sensations of pain here in this world: But there is no need of this sort of discipline in the blessed regions of heaven to teach the inhabitants such truths.

They well remember what feeble helpless creatures they were when they dwelt in flesh and blood; but they have put off those fleshly garments of mortality, with all its weaknesses together. The spirits of the blessed know nothing of those frailties, nor shall the bodies of the saints new-raised from the dust, bring back any of their old infirmities with them. These blessed creatures know well how entirely dependent they are for all things upon God their Creator, without the need of pains and maladies to teach them,

for they live every moment with God, and in a full dependence upon him: They are supported in their life and all its everlasting blessings, by his immediate presence, power, and mercy.

They have no need of pain in those fields or gardens of pleasure to teach them the evil of sin; they well remember all the sorrows they have passed through in their mortal state, while they were traversing the wilderness of this world, and they know that sin was the cause of them all. They see the evil of sin in the glass of the divine holiness, and the hateful contrariety that is in it to the nature of God is discovered in the immediate light of all his perfections, his wisdom, his truth and his goodness. They behold the evil of sin in the marks of the sufferings of their blessed Saviour; he appears in glory *as the Lamb that was slain*, and carries some memorials of his death about him, to let the saints know for ever what he has suffered to make atonement for their sins.

Nor have the blessed above any need to learn how dreadfully God can punish sin and sinners, while they behold his indignation going forth in a long and endless stream, to make the wicked enemies of God in hell for ever justly miserable: And in this sense it may be said, that *the smoke of their torments comes up before God and his holy angels, and his saints for ever;* Rev. xiv. 10. Nor do these happy beings stand in need of new sensations of pain, to teach them the exceeding greatness of the love of Christ, who exposed himself to intense and smarting anguish both of flesh and spirit, to procure their salvation: For while they dwell amidst the blessedness of that state, which the Redeemer purchased with the price of his own sufferings, they can never forget his love. Nor do they want to learn in heaven the value of the word of God and his promises, by which they were supported under their pains and sorrows in this mortal state. Those promises have been fulfilled to them partly on earth, and in a more glorious and abundant manner in the heavenly world. They relish the sweetness of all those words of mercy, in reviewing the means whereby divine grace sustained them in their former state of trial, and in the complete accomplishment of the best of those promises in their present situation amidst ten thousand endless blessings.

And if any of them were too cold and remiss, and infrequent in their applications to the mercy-seat by prayer, when they were here on earth, and stood in need of chastisement to make them pour out their prayers to God, yet they can never forget the value of this privilege while they themselves dwell round about the throne, and behold all their ancient sincere addresses to the mercy-seat answered and swallowed up in the full fruition of their present glories and joys. Praise is properly the language of heaven, when all their wants are supplied and their prayers on earth are finished; and whatever further desires they may have to present before God, the throne of grace is ever at hand, and God himself is ever in the midst of them to bestow every proper blessing in its season that belongs to the heavenly world. Not one of them can any more stand in need of chastisement or painful exercises of the flesh to drive them to the throne of God, while they are at home in their Father's house, and for ever near him and his all-sufficiency. It is from thence they are constantly deriving immortal supplies of blessedness as from a spring that will never fail.

Section V.—I proceed now to consider in the last place, what are the "practical lessons which pain may teach us while we are here on earth, in our state of probation and discipline, and shall afterward make it evident that there is no need of pain in heaven for the same purposes."

1. The frequent returns of pain may put us in mind "to offer to God his due sacrifices of praise for the months and years of ease which we have enjoyed." We are too ready to forget the mercy of God herein, unless we are awakened by new painful sensations; and when we experience new relief, then *our lips are opened* with thankfulness, *and our mouth shews forth his praise:* Then we cry out with devout language, *Blessed be the Lord that has delivered us!* When we have been oppressed for some time with extreme anguish, then one day, or one hour of ease fills the heart and the tongue with thankfulness; "blessed be the God of nature that has appointed medicines to restore our ease, and blessed be that goodness that has given success to them!" What a rich mercy is it under our acute torments, that there are methods of relief and healing found among the powers of nature, among the plants and the herbs, and the mineral stores which are under ground? Blessed be the Lord, who in the course of his providence has given skill to physicians to compose and to apply the proper means of relief! Blessed be that hand that has planted every herb in the field or the garden, and has made the bowels of the earth to teem with medicines for the recovery of our health and ease; and blessed be his name who has rebuked our maladies, who has constrained the smarting diseases to depart by the use of balms and balsams that are happily applied.

While we enjoy the benefits of common life, in health of body and in easy circumstances, we are too often thoughtless of the hand of God, which showers down these favours of heaven upon us in a long and constant succession; but when he sees fit to touch us with his finger, and awaken some lurking malady within us, our ease vanishes, our days are restless and painful, and tiresome nights of darkness pass over us without sleep or repose. Then we repent that we have so long forgotten *the God of our mercies;* and we learn to lift up our praises to the Lord, that every night of our lives has not been restless, that every day and hour has not been a season of racking pain. Blessed be the Lord that enables us, without anguish or uneasiness, to fulfil the common business of the day; and blessed be his hand that draws the peaceful curtains of the night round about us! And even in the midst of moderate pains, we bless his name who gives us refreshing slumbers; and we grow more careful to employ and improve every moment of returning ease, as the most proper way of expressing our thankfulness to our almighty Healer.

Alas! what poor, sorry, sinful creatures are we in the present state, who want to be taught the value of our mercies by the removal of them! The man of a robust and vigorous make, and a healthy constitution, knows not the true worth of health and ease, nor sets a due value upon these blessings of heaven; but we are taught to thank God feelingly, for an easy hour after long repeated twinges of pain: We bless that goodness which gives us an easy night after a day of distressing anguish. Blessed be the God of nature and grace, that has not made the gout or the stone immortal, nor subjected our sensible powers to an everlasting cholic or tooth-ach.

2. Pain in the flesh more effectually teaches us to sympathize with those who suffer. We learn a tenderness of soul experimentally by our own sufferings. We generally love self so well, that we forget our neighbours under special tribulation and distress, unless we are made to feel them too. In a particular manner, when our nature is pinched and pierced through with some smarting malady, we learn to pity those who lie groaning under the same disease. A kindred of sorrows and sufferings works up our natures into compassion, and we find our own hearts more sensibly affected with the groans of our

friends under a sharp fit of the gout or rheumatism, when we ourselves have felt the stings of the same distemper.

Our blessed Saviour himself, though he wanted not compassion and love to the children of men, since he came down from heaven on purpose to die for them, yet he is represented to us as our merciful High-priest, who had learned sympathy and compassion to our sorrows in the same way of experience as we learn it. He was encompassed about with infirmities, when he took the sinless frailties of our nature upon him, that he might learn to pity us under those frailties. *In that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted: For we have not a High-priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, though he was always without sin; and by the things which he suffered,* he may be said, after the manner of men, to learn sympathy and pity to miserable creatures, as well as *obedience to God, who is blessed for ever;* Heb. ii. 18. and chapter iv. 15. and chapter v. 2, 8.

3. Since our natures are subject to pain, it should teach us "watchfulness against every sin, lest we double our own distresses by the mixture of guilt with them." How careful should we be to keep always a clear conscience, that we may be able at all times to look up with pleasure to the hand of God who smites us, and be better composed to endure the pains which he inflicts upon us for our trial and improvement in grace. Innocence and piety, and a peaceful conscience, are an admirable defence to support the spirit against the overwhelming efforts of bodily pain: But when inward reproaches of mind and a racking conscience join with acute pain in the flesh, it is double misery, and aggravated wretchedness. The scourges and inward remorse of our own hearts, joined to the sorrows of nature, add torment to torment. How dreadful is it when we are forced to confess, "I have procured all this to myself by intemperance, by my rashness, by my obstinacy against the advice of friends, and rebellion against the commands of God!"

Probably it was such circumstances as these that gave the soul of David double anguish, *when his bones waxed old, through his roaring all the day long, when day and night the hand of God was heavy upon him, and his moisture was turned into the drought of summer;* when he complained unto God, *thy arrows stick fast in me and thy hand presseth me sore: There is no soundness in my flesh, because of thy anger; nor any rest in my bones, because of my sin. My iniquities are gone over my head as a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me. Deep calls unto deep at the noise of thy water-spouts, all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.* The deep of anguish in my flesh calls to the deep of sorrow in my soul, and makes a tremendous tumult within me. *My wounds stink, and are corrupt, because of my foolishness: I am feeble and sore broken; I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart;* nor could he find any rest or ease till he acknowledged his sin unto God, and confessed his transgressions, and till he had some comfortable hope that God had forgiven the iniquity of his sin. See this sorrowful scene exemplified in a very affecting manner in *Psalms* xxxii and xxxviii. Happy is the man that walks closely with his God in the days of health and ease, that whenever it shall please his heavenly Father to try him with smarting pain, he may find sweet relief from a peaceful conscience, and humble appeals to God concerning his own sincerity and watchfulness.

4. Pain in the flesh may sometimes be sent by the hand of God, to teach us "to wean

ourselves by degrees from this body, which we love too well; this body, which has all the springs of pain in it." How little should we be fond of this flesh and blood in the present feeble state, wherein we are continually liable to one malady or another; to the head-ach or the heart-ach, to wounds or bruises, and uneasy sensations of various kinds: Nor can the soul secure itself from them, while it is so closely united to this mortal body. And yet we are too fond of our present dwelling, though it be but in a cottage of clay, feeble and ruinous, where the winds and the storms are continually ready to break in and distress us. A sorry habitation indeed for an immortal spirit, since sin has mingled so many diseases in our constitution, has made so many avenues for smart and anguish in our flesh, and we are capable of admitting pain and agonies at every pore.

Pain is appointed to be a sort of balance to the "tempting pleasures of life, and to make us feel that perfect happiness does not grow among the inhabitants of flesh and blood." Pain takes away the pleasures of the day, and the repose of the night, and makes life bitter in all the returning seasons. The God of nature and grace is pleased, by sending sickness and pain, to loosen his own chidren by degrees from their fond attachment to this fleshly tabernacle, and to make us willing to depart at his call.

A long continuance of pain, or the frequent repeated twinges of it, will "teach a christian and incline him to meet death with courage, at the appointed hour of release." This will much abate the fierceness of *the king of terrors*, when he appears as a sovereign physician to finish every malady of nature. Death is sanctified to the holy soul, and by the covenant of grace this curse of nature is changed into a blessing. The grave is a safe retiring place from all the attacks of disease and anguish: And there are some incurables here on earth, which can find no perfect relief but in the grave. Neither maladies nor tyrants can stretch their terrors beyond this life; and if we can but look upon death as a conquered enemy, and its sting taken away by the death of Christ, we shall easily venture into this last combat, and obtain an everlasting victory. Blessed be God for the grave as a refuge from smarting pains! *Thanks be to God through Christ Jesus*, who enables us to triumph over the last pain of nature and to say, *O death! where is thy sting?* And, *O grave! where is thy victory?* 1 Cor. xv. 55.

In the fifth and last place, by the pains that we suffer in this body, "we are taught to breathe after the blessedness of the heavenly state, wherein there shall be no pain." When the soul is dismissed from the bonds of flesh, and presented before God in the world of spirits *without spot or blemish by* Jesus, our great forerunner, it is then appointed to dwell among *the spirits of the just made perfect*, who were all released in their several seasons from the body of flesh and sin. Maladies and infirmities of every kind are buried in the grave and cease for ever; and if we survey the properties of the new-raised body in the great resurrection day, as described, 1 *Cor.* xv 42—44. we shall find no room for pain there, no avenue or residence for smart or anguish. It will not be such a body of flesh and blood which can be a source of maladies, or subject to outward injuries; but by its own principles of innate vigour and immortality, as well as by the power and mercy of God, it shall be for ever secured from those uneasy sensations which made our flesh on earth painful and burdensome, and which tended toward dissolution and death. It is such a body as our Lord Jesus wore at his ascent to heaven in a bright cloud, for ever incorruptible; *for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption*, verses 49, 50. *As we have borne the image of the earthly*

Adam in the frailties and sufferings that belong to it, *so shall we also bear the image of the heavenly*, even the Lord Jesus Christ, *who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his own glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself;* Phil. iii. 21. We *shall hunger no more, we shall thirst no more, nor shall the sun light on us* with its parching beams, nor shall we be annoyed with fire or frost, with heat or cold, in those temperate and happy regions. *The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne* shall feed his people for ever there with the fruits of the tree of life, and with unknown entertainments suited to a glorified state. *He shall lead them to living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes;* Rev. vii. 16, 17.

Thus have I set before you the practical lessons which pain is designed to teach us in our present state; and we find that a body subject to maladies and pains, is a well-appointed school wherein our great Master gives us these divine instructions, and trains us up by degrees for the heavenly world. It is rough discipline indeed for the flesh, but it is wholesome for the soul: And there is many a christian here on earth that have been made to confess, they had never learned the practice of some of these virtues, if they had not been taught by such sort of discipline. Pain which was brought into human nature by sin, is happily suited by the providence of God to such a state of probation, wherein creatures born in the midst of sins and sorrows are by degrees recovered to the love of God and holiness, and fitted for the world of peace and joy.

But when we have done with this world, and departed from the tribes of mortal men, and from all the scenes of allurement and temptation, there is no more need that such lessons should be taught us in heaven, nor any painful scourge made use of by the Father of spirits, to carry on, or to maintain the divine work of holiness and grace within us. Let us survey this matter according to the foregoing particulars.

Is it possible that while the blessed above are surrounded with endless satisfactions flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb, they should forget their benefactor and neglect his praises? Is it possible they should dwell in immortal health and ease without interruption, under the constant vital influences of the king of glory, and yet want gratitude to the spring of all their blessings?

Nor is there any need for the inhabitants of a world, where no pains nor sorrows are found, "to learn compassion and sympathy to those who suffer," for there are no sufferers there: But love and joy, intense and intimate love, and a harmony of joy runs through all that blessed company and unites them in a universal sympathy, if I may so express it, or blissful sensation of each other's happiness. And I might add also, could there be such a thing as sorrow and misery in those regions, this divine principle of love would work sweetly and powerfully toward such objects in all necessary compassion.

What if pain was once made a spur to our duties in this frail state of flesh and blood? What if pain were designed as a guard against temptation, and a means to awaken our watch against new transgression and guilt? But in a climate where all is holiness, and all is peace, in the full enjoyment of the great God, and secured by that everlasting covenant which was sealed by the blood of the Lamb, there is no more danger of sinning. The soul is moulded into the more complete likeness of God, by living for ever under the light of his countenance, and the warmest beams of his love. What if we had need of the stings of pain and anguish in time past, to wean us by degrees from this body, and from all sensible things, and to make us willing to part with them all at the call of God?

Yet when we arrive at the heavenly world, we shall have no more need of being weaned from earth, we shall never look back upon that state of pain and frailty with a wishful eye, being for ever satisfied in the affluence of present joys.

O glorious and happy state! where millions of creatures who have dwelt in bodies of sin and pain, and have been guilty of innumerable follies and offences against their Maker, yet they are all forgiven, their robes are washed and made white in the blood of Jesus, their iniquities are cancelled for ever, and there shall not be one stroke more from the hand of God to chasten them, nor one more sensation of pain to punish them. Divine and illustrious privilege indeed, and a glorious world, where complete sanctification of all the powers of nature shall for ever secure us from new sins, and where the springs and causes of pain shall for ever cease, both within us and without us! Our glorified bodies shall have no avenue for pain to enter; the gates of heaven shall admit no enemy to afflict or hurt us; God is our everlasting friend, and our souls shall be satisfied with the *rivers of pleasure which flow for ever at the right hand of God;* Psalm xvi. 11. *Amen.*

DISCOURSE X.

THE FIRST FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT, OR THE FORETASTE OF HEAVEN.

ROMANS viii. 23.

AND NOT ONLY THEY, BUT OURSELVES ALSO, WHO HAVE THE FIRST FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT, EVEN WE OURSELVES GROAN WITHIN OURSELVES, WAITING FOR THE ADOPTION, THAT IS, THE REDEMPTION OF OUR BODY.

SECTION I.

IT is by a beautiful figure of speech the apostle had been describing, in the foregoing verses, the unnatural abuse which the creatures suffer through the sins of men, when they are employed to sinful purposes, and the dishonour of God their Creator. Permit me to read the words and represent the sense of them in a short paraphrase, verse 22. *We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.* The earth itself may be represented as groaning to bear such loads of iniquity, such a multitude of wicked men, who abuse the creatures of God, to the dishonour of him that made them: The air may be said to groan to give breath to those vile wretches who abuse it in filthiness and foolish talking, to the dishonour of God, and to the scandal of their neighbours; it groans to furnish men with breath that is abused in idolatry by the false worship of the true God, or the worship of creatures, which is abominable in his sight: The sun itself may be said to groan to give light to those sinners who abuse both daylight and darkness in rioting and wantonness, in doing mischief among men, and committing fresh iniquities against their Maker: The moon and stars are abused by adulterers and thieves, and other midnight sinners, when they any way afford light enough to them to guide them in their pursuit of wicked ways and practices. The beasts of burden may be said also to groan and be abused, when they bear the wicked sons and daughters of Adam to the accomplishment of their iniquities: And even all the parts of the brutal world, as well as of the inanimate creation, are some way or other made to serve the detestable and wicked purposes of the sinful children of men, and may be figuratively said to groan on this account. And if we have tasted of the fruits of the Spirit of grace, we cannot but in some measure groan with the rest of the creation, in expectation of the blessed day, when the creatures shall be delivered from this bondage of corruption, to which the providence of God has suffered them to be subjected in this degenerate state of things.

We hope there is a time coming when the creatures themselves shall be used according to the original appointment of their Maker, agreeable to their own first design, and for the good of their fellow-creatures, and supremely for the honour of their God, *in that day when holiness to the Lord shall be written upon the bells of the horses; and every pot in Jerusalem shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts;* Zech. xiv. 20. Why should we not join then with the whole creation in groaning and longing after this promised time, when all the works of God shall be restored to their rightful use, and the glory of the Maker shall some way or other be made to shine in every one of them?

The apostle then adds, in the words of my text, *and not these creatures only, but ourselves also who have the first fruits of the Spirit*, we who are filled with the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, and eminently the first fruits hereof appear in our taste and relish of the divine provisions that God has given us here in this world to prepare for a better; and even bestows upon some of his christian servants these first fruits of the tree of paradise, these blessings and these foretastes which are near akin to those of the upper world, when the saints shall be raised from the dead, when their adoption shall be clearly manifested, and they shall look like the children of God, and their bodies and all their natural powers shall be redeemed from those disorders, whether of sin or sorrow, and from all the springs and seeds of them, which they are more or less liable to feel in the present state.

Here let it be observed, that the first fruits of any field, or plant, or tree, are of the same kind with the full product of the harvest: Therefore it is plain, that *the first fruits of the Spirit* in this place cannot chiefly signify the gifts of the Spirit, such as the gifts of tongues, or of healing, or of miracles, nor the gifts of prophecy, preaching, or praying, because these are not the employments nor the enjoyments of heaven. The first fruits of the Spirit must rather refer therefore to the knowledge and holiness, the graces and the joys, which are more perfect and glorious in the heavenly state, than they were ever designed to be here upon earth. Now these first fruits of graces and joys are sometimes bestowed upon christians in this world in such a degree as brings them near to the heavenly state; and that is the chief observation I design to draw from these words, *viz.*

"That God has been pleased to give some of his children here on earth several of the foretastes of the heavenly blessedness, the graces, and the joys of the upper world;" as they are the first fruits of that paradise to which we are travelling: And these privileges have brought some of the saints within the confines and borders of the celestial country. What these are I shall shew immediately; but before I represent them I desire to lay down these few cautions:

Caution I. "These sensible foretastes of heaven do not belong to all christians; these are not such general blessings of the covenant of grace, of which every christian is made partaker;" but they are special favours now and then bestowed on some particular persons by the special will of God. 1. Such as are more eminent in faith, and holiness, and prayer than others are, such as have made great advancements in every part of religion, in mortification to the world, in spiritual-mindedness, in humility, and in much converse with God, &c. Or, 2. Sometimes these first fruits may be given unto such as are weak, both in reason and in faith, and may be *babes in Christ*, and are not able by their reasoning powers to search out their evidences for heaven, especially under some present temptation or darkness. Or, 3. Sometimes to those who are called by providence to go through huge and uncommon trials and sufferings, in order to support their spirits, and bear up their courage, their faith and patience.

It is true, the more general and common way whereby God prepares his people for heaven, is by leading them through several steps of advancing holiness, sincere repentance, mortification of sin, weanedness from the world, likeness to God, heavenly-mindedness, &c. These are indeed the usual preparatives for glory, and the surest evidences of a state of grace. Therefore let not any person imagine he is not a true christian, because he hath not enjoyed these special favours and signal manifestations.

II. "If there be any who have been favoured with these peculiar blessings, they must

not expect them to be constant and perpetual, nor always to be given in the same manner or same measure;" they are rare blessings and special reviving cordials; they are not the common food of christians, nor the daily nourishment of the saints. The word of God, and the grace of Christ in the promises, is our daily support, and the constant nourishment of our souls. Cordials are not given for our daily nourishment in the life of grace.

III. "However great and rapturous these foretastes may be, let us not so depend on them as to neglect the more substantial and solid evidences for heaven, and those steps of preparation," which I have elsewhere mentioned. Let not those who have enjoyed them give a loose to their souls, and let go their watchfulness, or neglect their daily mortification and diligence in every duty. Some of these divine raptures have sometimes been so nearly counterfeited by raptures of fancy, by warm self-love, or perhaps by the deceit of evil angels, that they are not so safe a foundation for our dependence and assured hope, as the soul's experience of a sincere repentance, and general turn of heart to God, and mortification of sin, and delight in every practice of holiness. The devil sometimes has *transformed himself into an angel of light;* 2 Cor. xi. 14. And there have been some who, at first hearing of the pospel, have had wondrous raptures. *Heb.* vi. 4. "It is said, *they have tasted of the powers of the world to come,*—who have yet fallen away again, and having lost all their sense and savour of divine things, have become vile apostates."

IV. "If you seem to enjoy any of these affectionate and rapturous foretastes of heaven, be jealous of the truth of them, if they have not a proportionable sanctifying influence upon your souls and your actions."

If you find they incline you to negligence in duty, to coldness in the common practices of religion and godliness, if they make you fancy that common ordinances are a low and needless dispensation, if they seem to excuse you from diligence in the common duties of life towards man, or religion towards God, there is great reason then to suspect them: There is danger lest they should be mere suggestions and deceitful workings either of your own natural passions, or the crafty snares of the artful and busy adversary of souls, on purpose to make you neglect solid religion, and make you part with what is substantial for a bright and flashy glimpse of heavenly things.

But, on the other hand, if you find that these special favours and enjoyments raise your hearts to a greater nearness to God, and more constant converse with him; if they keep you deep in humility, and in everlasting dependence on the grace of Christ in the gospel, and warm and zealous attendants on the ordinances of worship; if they teach and incline you to fulfil every duty of love to your neighbour, and particularly to your fellow-christians, then they appear to be the fruits of the Spirit; and as they fit you for every duty and providence here upon earth, there is very good reason to hope they are real visits from heaven, and are sent from the God of all grace to make you more meet for the heavenly glory.

Section II. These are the four cautions. I proceed now to describe some of these foretastes of the heavenly blessedness, and shew how nearly they resemble the blessedness and enjoyments of the heavenly world.

First, "In heaven there is a near view of God in his glories, with such a fixed contemplation of his several perfections, as draws out the heart into all correspondent exercises in an uncommon, transcendent, and supreme degree." It is described as one of the felicities of heaven, that *we shall see God;* Matt. v. 8. That we shall behold him *face to*

face, and not in shadows and glasses, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 12. Let us exhibit some particulars of this kind, and dwell a little upon them in the most easy and natural method.

1. " In heaven the blessed inhabitants behold the majesty and greatness of God in such a light as fixes their thoughts in glorious wonder and the humblest adoration, and exalts them to the highest pleasure and praise. Have you never fallen into such a devout and fixed contemplation of the majesty of God, as to be even astonished at his glory and greatness, and to have your souls so swallowed up in this sight, that all the sorrows and the joys of this life, all the businesses and necessities of it have been forgotten for a season, all things below and beneath God have seemed as nothing in your eyes? All the grandeurs and splendours of mortality have been buried in darkness and oblivion, and creatures have, as it were, vanished from the thoughts and been lost, as the stars die and vanish at the rising sun, and are no more seen? Have you never seen the face of God in his sublime grandeur, excellence, and majesty, so as to shrink into the dust before him, and lie low at his foot with humblest adoration? And you have been transported into a feeling acknowledgment of your own nothingness in the presence of God. Such a sight the prophet Isaiah seems to have enjoyed, Isaiah xl. 12, 15, 17. *Behold the nations before him are as the drop of the bucket, and as the small dust of the balance, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. All nations before him are as nothing, they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity.* " When the lips are not only directed to speak this sublime language, but the soul, as it were, beholds God in these heights of transcendent majesty, it is overwhelmed with blessed wonder and surprising delight, even while it adores in most profound lowliness and self-abasement. This is the emblem of the worship of the heavenly world, see *Rev.* iv. 10. where the elders, saints and prophets, martyrs, angels, and dominions, and principalities of the highest degree, cast down their crowns at the foot of him that made them, and exalt God in his supremacy over all."

2. " In heaven there are such blessed and extensive surveys of the infinite knowledge of God, and his amazing wisdom discovered in his works, as makes even all their own heavenly improvements in knowledge and understanding to appear as mere ignorance, darkness, and folly before him. In such an hour as this is, the holy *angels* may *charge* themselves *with folly* in his sight, as he beholds them in the imperfection of their understanding. Now have you never been carried away in your meditations of the all-comprehensive knowledge of God to such a degree, as to lose and abandon all your former pride and appearances of knowledge and wisdom in all the native and acquired riches of it, and count them all as nothing in his sight? Have you never looked upward to the midnight skies, and with amazement sent your thoughts upward to him who calls all the stars by their names, and brings them forth in all their sparkling glories, who marshals them in their nightly ranks and orders, and then stood overwhelmed with sacred astonishment at the wisdom which made and ranged them all in their proper situations, and there appointed them to fulfil ten thousand useful purposes, and that not only towards this little ball of earth, but to a multitude of upper planetary worlds? Have you never enquired into the wonders of his wisdom in framing the bodies, the limbs, and the senses of millions of animals, birds and beasts, fishes, and insects, as well as men all around this globe, and who hath framed all their organs and powers of nature with exquisite skill, to see and hear, to run and fly, and swim, to produce their young in all their proper forms and sizes, furnished with their various powers, and to feed and nourish them in

their innumerable shapes and colours, admirable for strength and beauty? And have you not felt your souls filled with devout adoration at the unspeakable and infinite contrivances of a God?

"And not only his works of creation, but of his providence too, have afforded some pious souls such devout amazement. What astonishing wisdom must that be which has created mankind on earth near six thousand years ago, and by his divine word in every age, continues to create them or give them being, with all the same natural powers and parts, beauties and excellencies! That he hath wisely governed so many millions of animals with living souls or spirits in them, so many millions of intelligent creatures, endued with a free will of their own to choose or refuse what they will or will not do, and hath managed this innumerable company of beings in all ages, notwithstanding all their different and clashing opinions and customs, their crossing humours, wills and passions, in endless variety, and yet hath made them all subservient to his own comprehensive designs and purposes through all ages of the world, and all nations on earth! What inconceivable wisdom is that which hath effectually appointed them all to centre in the accomplishment of his own eternal counsels! And with what overwhelming amazement will this scene appear, when he shall shut up the theatre of this earth, and *fold up the heavens as a curtain*, and this visible structure of things shall be *laid in ashes?* What an astonishing view must this be of the all-surveying knowledge, all-comprehending wisdom of a God, and with what holy and humble pleasure must the pious soul be filled, who takes in and enjoys this scene of infinite varieties and wonders? How near doth such an hour approach to the bliss of heaven, and the raptures of contemplation, which belong to the blessed inhabitants of it?"

3. I might add something of the almighty power of God in his creation and government of the world, in his kingdoms of nature and providence. "Did not the angels rejoice at the birth-day of this universe, and those *morning stars shout for joy* at the first appearance of this creation;" *Job* xxxviii. 7. And what the inhabitants of heaven make their song, may not a holy soul be entertained with it, even to extasy and rapture? "I behold," says he, in divine meditation, "I behold this huge structure of the universe rising out of nothing at the voice of his command; I behold the several planets in their various orders set a moving by the same word of power. With what delightful surprise do I hear him pronouncing the words, *Let there be light*, and lo, the light appears, *Gen.* i. 3. Let there be earth and seas; let there be clouds and heavens; let there be sun, moon and stars, and lo! the heavens, and the dry land, and the waters appear, the clouds and the stars in their various order and situation, and all the parts of the creation arise, all replenished with proper ornaments and animals according to his word. At his command nature exists in all its regions with all its furniture; the beasts, and birds, and fishes in all their forms arise, and at once they obey the several almighty orders he gave, and by the unknown and inconceivable force of such a word, they leap out into existence in ten thousand forms.

"Again, what divine pleasure is it to hear a God beginning the work of his providence, and speaking those wondrous words of power to every plant and animal, *be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth;* Gen. i. 22. and lo! in a long succession of near six thousand years, the earth has been covered all over with herbs and plants, with shrubs and tall trees in all their beauty and dimensions. The air hath been filled with birds and insects, the seas and rivers with fish, and the dry land with beasts and men even to this

present day. When all this philosophy is changed into devotion, it must also be transformed into divine and unutterable joy.

" Nor are these things too low and mean for the contemplation of heavenly beings: For God is seen in all of them: There is not a spire of grass but the power and wisdom of a God are visible therein. And it is certain the heavenly beings must be sometimes employed in the contemplation of many of these lower wonders. The plants and beasts in desolate regions where no man inhabits, and in distant and foreign oceans and rivers, where the fishy shoals in all their variety and numbers, in all their successions and generations, for near six thousand years, were never seen nor known by any of the sons of men; these seem to have been created in vain, if no heavenly beings are acquainted with them, nor raise a revenue of glory to him that made them.

" This almighty power, therefore, which made this huge universe, which sustains the frame of it every moment, and secures it from dissolving, this power which *brings forth the stars in their order*, and worms and creeping things in their innumerable millions, and governs all the motions of them to the purposes of divine glory, must needs affect a contemplative soul with raptures of pleasing meditation; and in these sublime meditations, by the aids of the divine Spirit, a soul on earth may get near to heaven. And with what religious and unknown pleasure at such a season doth it shrink its own being, as it were, into an atom, and lie in the dust and adore!"

4. " The all-sufficiency of the great God to form and to supply every creature with all that it can want or desire," is another perfection of the divine nature which is better known in heaven than it ever was here on earth, and affords another scene of astonishment and sacred delight: And there may be some advances towards this pleasure found among saints below, some first fruits of this heavenly felicity and joy in the all-sufficiency of God.

" My whole self, body and mind, is from God, and from him alone. All my limbs and powers of flesh and spirit were derived from him, and borrowed their first existence from their original pattern in his fruitful mind. All that I have of life or comfort, of breath or being, with all my blessings round about me, is owing to his boundless and eternal fulness; and all my long-reaching hopes and endless expectations, that stretch far into futurity, and an eternal world, are growing out of this same all-sufficient fulness.

" But what do I think or speak of so little a trifle as I am? Stretch thy thoughts, O my soul, through the lengths, and breadths, and depths of his creation, O what an inconceivable fulness of being, glory, and excellency is found in God, the universal parent and spring of all! What an inexhaustible ocean of being and life, of perfection and blessedness, must our God be, who supplies all the infinite armies of his creatures in all his known and unknown dominions with life and motion, with breath and activity, with food and support, with satisfaction and delight! Who maintains the vital powers and faculties of all the spirits which he hath made in all the visible and invisible worlds, in all his territories of light, and peace, and joy, and in all the regions of darkness, punishment, and misery! In him all things *live, and move, and have their being;* Acts xvii. 28. *He withdraws his breath, and they die;* Psalm civ. 29. He hath written down all their names in his own mind, he gives them all their natures, and without him there is nothing, there can be nothing; all nature without him would have been a perpetual blank, a universal emptiness, an everlasting void, and with one turn of his will he could sink and dissolve all nature into its original nothing.

"Confess, O my soul, thy own nothingness in his presence, and with astonishing pleasure and worship adore his fulness: He is thy everlasting all. Be thy dependence ever fixed upon him; thou canst not, thou shalt not live a moment without him, without this habitual dependence, and a frequent delightful acknowledgment of it. Such a devout frame as this is heaven, and such scenes now and then passing through the soul are glimpses of the heavenly blessedness."

Section III. Though the eternity and immensity of God might perhaps in their own nature, and in the reason of things, be first mentioned, yet his majesty, his power, and his wisdom, in their sovereign excellency, strike the souls of creatures more immediately, therefore I have put these first. However, let us now consider the eternity of the great God and his omnipresence, and think how the spirits in heaven are affected therewith, and what kindred meditations may be derived from these perfections by the saints here on earth. I proceed, therefore,

5. To the eternity of God; which, though the most exalted spirit in heaven cannot comprehend, yet it is probable they have some nearer and clearer discovery of it than we can have here in this mortal state, while we dwell in flesh and blood. We have nothing in this visible world that gives us so much as an example or similitude of it. The great God *who is, who was, and who is to come* through all ages, he is, and was, and for ever will be the same. Let us go back as many thousand ages as we can in our thoughts, and still an eternal God was before them; a being that had no beginning of his existence, nor will have any end of his life or duration. And, as he says to Moses, *My name is, I AM THAT I AM;* Exod. iii. 14. So as there is nothing which had any hand in his being, but all the reasons of it are derived from his own self-fulness, therefore we may say of him, that "he is because he is," and because "he will be:" He had no spring of his first beginning, nor any cause of his continued existence, but what is within himself. We can never set ourselves in too mean a light when an eternal God is near us; and every thing besides God can be but little in our eyes.

"And, O my thinking powers, are ye not sweetly lost in this holy rapture, and overpowered with divine pleasure, O my soul, in such meditation as this? Art thou not delightfully surprised with the thoughts of such self-sufficience, and such an inconceivable perfection? Thy being considered as here in this life, is not so much in the sight of God as an atom in comparison of the whole earth; and even the supposed future ages of thy existence in the eternal state are inconceivably short, when compared with the glory of that being that never began his life or his duration.

"Many things here on earth concur towards my satisfaction and peace, but if I have God my friend, I have all in him that I can possibly want or desire. Let me then live no longer upon creatures when God is all. Let sun, moon, and stars vanish, and all this visible creation disappear, and be for ever annihilated, if God please; he himself is still my eternal hope and never-failing spring of all my blessedness. My expectations are continually safe in his hands, and shall never fail while I am so near him. This is *joy unspeakable, and* akin *to glory.*"

6. Let us meditate also on the immensity of God, which I think is much better expressed by his omnipresence. God is wheresoever any creature is or can be, knowing immediately, by his own presence, all that belongs to them, all that they are or can be, all that they do or can do, all that concerns them, whether their sins or their virtues, their pains or their pleasures, their hopes or their fears. It implies also that he doth, by his

immediate power and influence, support and govern all the creatures. In short, this immensity is nothing else but the infinite extent of his knowledge and his power, and it reaches to and beyond all places, as eternity reaches to and beyond all time. This the blessed above know and rejoice in, and take infinite satisfaction therein; having God as it were surrounding them on all sides, so that they cannot be where he is not, he is ever present with his all-sufficiency ready to bestow on them all they wish or desire while he continues their God, that is, for ever and ever. They are under the blessing of his eye, and the care of his hand, to guard them from every evil, and to secure their peace. "Let thy flesh or spirit be surrounded with never so many thousand dangers or enemies, they cannot do thee the least damage without his leave, by force or by surprise, while such an almighty being is all around thee; nor hast thou reason to indulge any fear while the spring and ocean of life, activity, and blessedness thus secures thee on every side. If thou hast the evidences of his children on thee, thou possessest an eternal security of thy peace."

7. The sovereignty and dominion of the blessed God is a farther meditation and pleasure which becomes and adorns the inhabitants of the heavenly world. There he reigns upon the throne of his glory, and the greater part of the territories which are subject to him are less in their view than our scanty powers of nature or perception can now apprehend, and a proportionable degree of pleasure is found with the saints above in these contemplations. But in our present state of mortality our souls can only look through these lattices of flesh and blood, and make a few scanty and imperfect inferences from what they always see, and hear, and feel; and yet the glorious sovereignty and dominion of the blessed God may so penetrate the soul with a divine sense of it here on earth, as to raise up a heaven of wonder and joy within.

"Adore him, O my soul, who surveys and rules all things which he has made with an absolute authority, and is for ever uncontroulable. How righteous a thing is it that he should give laws to all the beings which his hand hath formed, which his breath hath spoken into life, and especially that rank which his favour hath furnished with immortality? How just that he should be obeyed by every creature without the least reluctance or reserve, without a moment's delay, and that to all the length of their existence. "Submit to his government with pleasure, O my nature, and be all ye my powers of soul and body in everlasting readiness to do whatsoever he requires, and to be whatsoever he appoints. Wilt thou have me, O Lord, lie under sickness or pain, wilt thou have me languish under weakness and confinement? I am at thy foot, I am for ever at thy disposal. Wilt thou have me active and vigorous in thy service? Lord, I am ready with utmost cheerfulness. Wilt thou confine me to painful idleness and long patience? Lord, *here I am, do with me what seemeth good unto thee.* I am ready to serve thy purposes here, or thy orders in the unknown world of spirits, when thou shalt dissolve this mortal frame: I lay down these limbs in the dust of death at thy command: I venture into the regions of angels and unbodied minds at thy summons. I will be what thou wilt, I will go when thou wilt, I will dwell where thou wilt, for thou art always with me, and I am entirely thine. I both rejoice and tremble at thy sovereignty and dominion over all. God cannot do injury to a creature, who is so entirely his own property; God will not deal unkindly with a creature who is so sensible of his just dominion and supremacy, and which bows at the foot of his sovereignty with so much relish of satisfaction."

8. Let us next take notice of the perfect purity of the nature of God, his universal

holiness, the rectitude of the divine nature manifested in all his thoughts, his works, and his words, all perfectly agreeable to the eternal rules of truth and righteousness, and at the farthest distance from every thing that is false and faulty, every thing that is or can be dishonourable to so glorious a being. "Have we never seen God in this light, in the glory of his holiness, his universal rectitude, and the everlasting harmony of all his perfections, in exact correspondence with all the notions we can have of truth and reason? And has not God appeared then as a glorious and lovely being? And have we not at the same time beheld ourselves as unclean and unholy creatures, in one part or other of our natures, ever ready to jar or fall out with some of the most pure and perfect rules of honour, justice, or truth? Have we not seen all our sins and iniquities in this light with utmost abhorrence and highest hatred of them, and looked down upon ourselves with a deep and overwhelming sense of shame and displicence against our depraved and corrupted natures, and abased ourselves as Job does *in dust and ashes*, and not daring to open our mouths before him, Job xlii. 5, 6. *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye seeth thee, and I abhor myself in dust and ashes.* The least spot or blemish of sin grows highly offensive and painful to the eyes of a saint in this situation. Every little warping from truth in our conversation, every degree of insincerity or fraud, becomes a smarting uneasiness to the mind in the remembrance of our past follies in the present state. There is the highest abhorrence of sin among all the heavenly inhabitants, and this sight of God, in the beauties of his holiness, and his perfect rectitude, is an everlasting preservative to holy souls against the admission of an impure or unholy thought; and therefore some divines have supposed, that the angels, at their first creation, were put into a state of trial before they were admitted to this full sight of the beauty of God in his holiness, which would have secured them from the least thought or step towards apostacy.

"O my soul, of what happy importance it is to thee to maintain, as long as possible, this sense of the purity, rectitude, and perfection of the nature of the blessed God, *who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity*, with the least regard of approbation or allowance, *Hab.* i. 13. And what infinite condescension is it in such a God to find out and appoint a way of grace, whereby such shameful polluted creatures as we are should ever be admitted into his presence to make the least address to his majesty, or to hope for his favour."

Besides, in this sublime view of the holiness of God, we shall not only love God better than ever, as we see him more amiable under this view of his glorious attributes, but we shall grow more sincere and fervent in our love to all that is holy, to every saint in heaven and on earth: We shall not bear any estrangedness or alienation from those who have so much of the likeness of God in them. They will ever appear to be *the excellent of the earth, in whom is all our delight;* Psalm xvi. 2. Their supposed blemishes will vanish at the thought of their likeness to God in holiness; and especially our blessed Lord Jesus, the Son of God, will be most precious and all-glorious in our eyes, as he is the most perfect image of his Father's holiness. There is nothing in the blessed God but the man Christ Jesus bears a proportionable resemblance to it, as far as a creature can resemble God, and he will consequently be highest in our esteem under God, the Lord and Father of all.

9. The ever-pleasing attribute of divine goodness and love is another endless and joyful theme or object of the contemplation of the heavenly world. There this perfection shines in its brightest rays, there it displays its most triumphant glories, and kindles a flame of

everlasting joy in all the sons of blessedness. But we in this world may have such glimpses of this goodness and love as may fill the soul with unspeakable pleasure, and begin in it the first fruits and earnest of heaven. When we survey the inexhaustible ocean of goodness which is in God, which fills and supplies all the creatures with every thing they stand in need of; when we behold all the tribes of the sons of men supported by his boundless sufficiency, his bounty and kind providence, and refreshed with a thousand comforts beyond what the mere necessities of nature require. In such an hour, if we feel the least flowings of goodness in ourselves towards others, we shall humble ourselves to the dust, and cry out in holy amazement, " Lord, what is an atom to a mountain? What is a drop to a river, a sea of beneficence? What is a shadow to the eternal substance? What good thing is there in time or in eternity which I can possibly want, which is not abundantly supplied out of thy overflowing fulness? Hence arises the eternal satisfaction of all the holy and happy creation in being so near to thee, and under the everlasting assurances of thy love. I can do nothing but fall down before thee in deepest humility, and admire, adore, and everlastingly love thee, who hast assumed to thyself the name of love." 1 John iv. 8. *God is love.*

Section IV. Thus far our joys may rise into an imitation of the joys above, in the devout contemplation of divine perfections. And not only the perfections of God considered and surveyed singly in themselves, but the union and blessed harmony of many of them, in the divine works and transactions of providence and of grace, especially in the gospel of Christ, administer farther matter for contemplation and pleasure among the happy spirits in heaven. And so far as this enjoyment may be communicated to the saints here on earth, they may be also said to have a foretaste of the business and pleasure of heaven. Let us take notice of this harmony in several instances.

1. In the sacred constitution of the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, as God and man united in one personal agent: Here majesty and mercy give a glorious instance of their union, here all the grandeur and dignity of godhead condescends to join itself in union with a creature, such as man is, a spirit dwelling in flesh and blood, 1 Tim. ii. 5. *There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, even the man Christ Jesus:* But this man is personally united to the blessed God, he is *God manifest in the flesh:* He is a man *in whom dwells all the fulness of the godhead bodily,* to constitute one all-sufficient Saviour of miserable and fallen mankind: What an amazing stoop or condescension is this for the eternal godhead thus to join itself to a creature, and what a surprising exaltation is this of the creature for the man Christ Jesus thus to be assumed into so near a relation to the blessed God? All the glories that result from this divine contrivance and transaction are not to be renumerated in paper, nor by the best capacity of writers here on earth: The heavenly inhabitants are much better acquainted with them.

Again, here is an example of the harmony and co-operation of unsearchable wisdom and all-commanding power in the person of the blessed Jesus; and what a happy design is hereby executed, namely, the reconciliation of sinful man and the holy and glorious God; and who could do this but one who was possessed of such wisdom and such power? When there was no creature in heaven or earth sufficient for this work, God was pleased to appoint such a union between a creature and the Creator, between God and man, as might answer all the inconceivable purposes concealed in his thought. If there be wanting a person fit to execute any of his infinite designs, he will not be frustrated for

want of an agent, he will appoint God and man to be so nearly united as to become one agent to execute this design.

2. In the manner of our salvation, *viz.* by an atonement for sin. The great God did not think it proper, nor agreeable to his sublime holiness, to receive sinful man into his favour without an atonement for sin, and a satisfaction made to the governor of the world for the abuse and violation of his holy law here on earth; and therefore he appointed such a sacrifice of atonement as might be sufficient to do complete honour to the law-giver, as well as to save and deliver the offender from death: Therefore Jesus was made a man capable of suffering and dying, that he might honour the majesty and the justice of the broken law of God, and that he might do it completely by the union of godhead to this man and Mediator; the dignity of whose divinity diffuses itself over all that he did, and all that he suffered, so as to make his obedience completely acceptable to God, instead of thousands of creatures, and fully satisfactory for the offence that was given him by them; here is a sacrifice provided equal to the guilt of sin, and therefore sufficient to take it away.

You see here what a blessed harmony there is between the justice of God doing honour to his own law, and his compassion resolved to save a ruined creature: Here is no blemish cast upon the strict justice and righteousness of God, when the offender is forgiven in such a method as may do honour to justice and mercy at once, Rom. iii. 24, 25. *We are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness,* even his perfect governing justice, though he passes by and pardons the sins of a thousand criminal creatures; *to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might* appear to *be just* to his own authority and law, while he *justifies the sinful man who believeth* or trusteth *in Jesus* the Mediator, as becoming a proper sacrifice and propitiation for sin.

3. By the sanctification of our nature. There is also another remarkable harmony between the holiness of God and his mercy in this work of the salvation of sinful man. The guilt of sin is not only to be forgiven and taken away by a complete atonement and sacrifice, but the sinful nature of this ruined creature is to be changed into holiness, is to be renewed and sanctified by the blessed Spirit, and reformed into the image of God his Maker: He must not only be released from punishment by forgiveness, but he must be restored to the image of God by sanctifying grace; so that he may be fit company for the rest of the favourites of God in the upper world; that he may be qualified to be admitted into this society, where perfect purity and holiness are necessary for all the inhabitants of this upper world, and for such near attendants on the blessed God: In that happy state *nothing shall enter there that defileth;* Rev. xxi. 27. and therefore concerning the criminals among the Corinthians, as vile and as offensive to the pure and holy God as they are represented, 1 Cor. vi. 9—11. *viz. Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, drunkards,* &c. but it is said, *they are washed, but they are sanctified, but they are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*

Now when the souls of the saints here on earth are raised to such divine contemplations, what transporting satisfaction and delight must arise from the surprising union and harmony of the attributes of the blessed God in these his transactions? And especially when the soul in the lively exercise of grace and view of its own pardon, justification, and restored holiness, looks upon itself as one of these happy favourites of the majesty of

heaven: It cries out, as it were, in holy amazement, "What a divine profusion is here of wisdom and power, glory and grace, to save a wretched worm from everlasting burnings, and to advance a worthless rebel to such undeserved and exalted glories!"

Section V. "The wonders of divine perfections united in the success of the gospel" give an extasy of joy sometimes to holy souls. Not only do these views of the united perfections of God, as they are concerned in the contrivance of the gospel, entertain the saints above with new and pleasurable contemplations, but the wonders of divine wisdom, power, and grace, united and harmonizing in the propagation and success of this gospel, become a matter of delightful attention and survey to the saints on high.

This is imitated also in a measure by the children of God here on earth. Have you never felt such a surprising pleasure in the view of the attributes of God, his grace, wisdom, and power of making these divine designs so happily efficacious for the good of thousands of souls? *If there be joy in heaven among the angels of God at the conversion of a sinner*, Luke xv. 7, 10. what perpetual messages of unknown satisfaction and delight did the daily and constant labours of the blessed apostle Paul send to the upper world? What perpetual tidings were carried to the worlds on high of such and such souls, converted unto God from gross idolatry, from the worship *of dumb idols*, from the vain superstition of their heroes and mediator gods, and from the impure and bloody sacrifices of their own countrymen, whereby they intended to satisfy their gods for their own iniquities, and to reconcile themselves to these invented gods, these demons or devils, which were deified by the folly and madness of sinful men? What new hallelujahs must it put into the mouths of the saints and angels on high, to see the true and living God worshipped by thousands that had never before known him, and to see *Jesus the Mediator* in all the glories of his divine offices admired and adored by those who lately had either known nothing of him, or been shameful revilers and blasphemers of his majesty?

And what an unknown delight is diffused through many of the saints of God now here on earth upon such tidings, not only from the foreign and heathen countries, but even some who have professed christianity, but under gross mistakes, and miserable fogs of darkness and superstition? What an inconceivable and overwhelming pleasure has surprised a christian sometimes in the midst of his zealous worship of God and his Saviour, to hear of such tidings of new subjects in multitudes submitting themselves to their divine dominion? And even in our day, whensoever we hear of the work of grace begun by the ministry of the word, awakening a drowsy and lethargic soul from its dangerous sleep on the brink of hell, rousing a negligent and slothful creature from his indolence and carelessness about the things of eternity; or, again, in making a heart soft and impressive to the powers of divine grace, which was before hard as the nether millstone; and especially when multitudes of these tidings come together from distant places, as of late we have heard from New England, and several of those plantations; from Scotland, and several of her assemblies, what additional scenes of heavenly joy and pleasure have been raised amongst the pious souls, both those who relate and those who hear them.

Section VI. "Foretastes of heaven are sometimes derived from the overflowing sense of the love of God let in upon the soul." The spirits above, who are surrounded with this blessedness and this love, and rejoice in the everlasting assurance of it, cannot but be filled with intense joy. What can be a greater foundation of complete blessedness and delight than the immediate "sensation and assurance of being beloved by the glorious,

and supreme, and the all-sufficient Being," who will never suffer his favourites to want any thing he can bestow upon them to make them happy in perfection, and for ever? All creatures are under his present view and immediate command; there is not the least of them can give disturbance to any of the favourites of heaven, who dwell in the midst of their Creator's love; nor is there any creature that can be employed towards the complete happiness of the saints on high, but is for ever under the disposal of that God who has made all things, and it shall be employed upon every just occasion for the display of his love to his saints.

Some have imagined that that " perfect satisfaction of soul which arises from a good conscience, speaking peace inwardly in the survey of its sincere desire to please God in all things, and having with uprightness of heart fulfilled its duty," is the supreme delight of heaven; but it is my opinion, God has never made the felicity of his creatures to be drawn so entirely out of themselves, or from the spring of their own bosom, as this notion seems to imply. God himself will be all in all to his creatures; and all their original springs of blessedness, as well as being, are in him, and must be derived from him: It is therefore the overflowing sense of being beloved by a God almighty and eternal, that is the supreme fountain of joy and blessedness to every reasonable nature, and the endless security of this happiness is joy everlasting in all the regions of the blessed above.

Now a taste of this kind is heavenly blessedness even on this earth, where God is pleased to bestow it on his creatures; and the glimpses of it bring such extasies into the soul as can hardly be conceived, or revealed to others, but it is best felt by them who enjoy it.

Section VII. " Foretastes of heaven in the fervent emotions of soul in love to Jesus Christ." What the love and strong affections of the blessed saints above towards Jesus Christ their Lord and Saviour may impress of joy on their spirits, is not possible for us to learn in the present state; but there are some who have even here on earth felt such transcendent affections to Jesus the Son of God, even though they have never enjoyed the sight of him, yet they love him with most intense and ardent zeal; their devotion almost swallows them up, and carries them away captive above all earthly things, and brings them near to the heavenly world. There is an unknown joy which arises from such intense love to an object so lovely and so deserving; such is that which is spoken concerning the saints to whom St. Peter wrote, 1 Peter i. 8. *whom having not seen, ye love, in whom, though now you see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.* It is through this divine taste of love, and joy, and glory communicated by the blessed Spirit, revealing the things of Christ to their souls, that many of the confessors and martyrs in the primitive ages, and in later times, have not only joyfully parted with all their possessions and their comforts in this life, but have followed the call of God through prisons and deaths of a most dreadful kind, through racks, and fires, and many torments, for the sake of the love of Jesus; and perhaps there may be some in our day who have had so lively and strong a sensation of the love of Christ let in upon their souls, that they could not only be content to be absent from all their carnal delights for ever, but even from their intellectual and more spiritual entertainments, if they might be for ever placed in such a situation to Jesus Christ, as to feel the everlasting beams of his love let out upon them, and to rejoice in him with perpetual delight. As he is the nearest image of God the Father, they can love nothing beneath God equal to their love of him, nor delight in any thing beneath God equal to their delight in Jesus Christ: Indeed their

love and their joy are so wrapped up in the great and blessed God as he appears in Christ Jesus, that they do not usually divide their affections in this matter, but love God supremely for ever, as revealing himself in his most perfect love in Christ Jesus unto their souls. How near this may approach to the glorified love of the saints in heaven, or what difference there is between the holy ones above and saints below in this respect, may be hard to say.

Section VIII. "Foretastes of heaven in the transcendent love of the saints to each other." I might here ask some advanced saints, "Have you never seen or heard of a fellow-christian growing into such a near resemblance to the blessed Jesus, in all the virtues and graces of the Spirit, that you would willingly part with all the attainments and honours that you have already arrived at, which make you never so eminent in the world or in the church, as to be made so near a conformist to the image of the blessed Jesus as this fellow-christian has seemed to be?

"Have you never seen or read of the glories and graces of the Son of God exemplified in some of the saints in so high a degree, and at the same time been so divested of self, and so mortified to a narrow self love, as to be satisfied with the lowest and the meanest supports of life, and the meanest station in the church of Christ here on earth, if you might but be favoured to partake of that transcendent likeness to the holy Jesus, as you would fain imitate and possess?

"Have you never had a view of all the virtues and graces of the saints, derived from one eternal fountain, the blessed God, and flowing through the mediation of Jesus his Son in so glorious a manner, that you have longed for the day when you shall be amongst them, and receive your share of this blessedness? Have you never found yourself so united to them in one heart and one soul, that you have wished them all the same blessings that you wished to yourself, and that without the least shadow of grudging or envy, if every one of them were partaker as much as you?" There is no envy among the heavenly inhabitants; nor doth St. Paul receive the less, because Cephas or Apollos has a large share. Every vessel has its capacity enlarged to a proper extent by the God of nature and grace, and every vessel is completely filled, and feels itself for ever full and for ever happy; then there cannot be found the shadow of envy amongst them.

Now to sum up the view of these things in short; who is there that enjoys these blessed evidences of an interest in the inheritance on high? Who is there that has any such foretastes of the felicity above, but must join with *the whole creation* in groaning for that great day, when all the children of God shall appear in the splendour of their adoption, and every thing in nature and grace among them shall attain the proper end for which it was at first designed? And whensoever any such christian hears some of the last words in the Bible pronounced by our Lord Jesus, *surely I come quickly*, he must immediately join the universal echo of the saints with unspeakable delight, *Even so come, O Lord Jesus;* Rev. xxii. 20.

DISCOURSE XI.

SAFETY IN THE GRAVE, AND JOY AT THE RESURRECTION.

JOB xiv. 13, 14, 15.

O THAT THOU WOULDST HIDE ME IN THE GRAVE, THAT THOU WOULDST KEEP ME SECRET UNTIL THY WRATH BE PAST, THAT THOU WOULDST APPOINT ME A SET TIME AND REMEMBER ME! IF A MAN DIE SHALL HE LIVE AGAIN? ALL THE DAYS OF MY APPOINTED TIME WILL I WAIT TILL MY CHANGE COME. THOU SHALT CALL AND I WILL ANSWER THEE: THOU WILT HAVE A DESIRE TO THE WORK OF THY HANDS.

BEFORE we attempt to make any improvement of these words of Job for our present edification, it is necessary that we search out the true meaning of them. There are two general senses of these three verses, which are given by some of the most considerable interpreters of scripture, and they are exceeding different from each other.

The first is this, "Some suppose Job, under the extremity of his anguish, to long after death here, as he does in some other parts of this book, and to desire that God would cut him off from the land of the living, and hide him in the grave, or, at least, take him away from the present stage of action, and conceal him in some retired and solitary place, dark as the grave is, till all the days which might be designed for his pain and sorrow were finished: And that God would appoint him a time for his restoration to health and happiness again in this world, and raise him to the possession of it, by calling him out of that dark and solitary place of retreat; and then Job would answer him, and appear with pleasure at such a call of providence."

Others give this sense of the words, "that though the pressing and overwhelming sorrows of this good man constrained him to long for death, and he entreated of God that he might be sent to the grave as a hiding-place, and thus be delivered from his present calamities, yet he had some divine glimpse of a resurrection or living again, and he hopes for the happiness of a future state when God should call him out of the grave. He knew that the blessed God would have a desire to restore *the work of his own hands* to life again, and Job would answer the call of his God into a resurrection with holy pleasure and joy."

Now, there are four or five reasons which incline me to prefer this latter sense of the words, and to shew that the comforts and hope which Job aspires to in this place, are only to be derived from a resurrection to final happiness.

Reason I. The express words of the text are, *O that thou wouldst hide me in the grave!* not in a darksome place like the grave; and where the literal sense of the words is plain and agreeable to the context, there is no need of making metaphors to explain them. There is nothing that can encourage us to suppose that Job had any hope of happiness in this world again, after he was gone down to the grave; and therefore he

would not make so unreasonable a petition to the great God. This seems to be too foolish and too hopeless a request for us to put into the mouth of so wise and good a man.

II. He seems to limit the continuance of man in the state of death, to the duration of the heavens; verse 12. *Man lieth down and riseth not till the heavens be no more;* not absolutely for ever does Job desire to be hidden in the grave, but till the dissolution of all these visible things, these heavens and this earth, and the great rising-day for the sons of men. These words seem to have a plain aspect towards the resurrection. And especially when he adds, *they shall not be wakened nor raised out of their sleep.* The brutes when dying are never said to sleep in scripture, because they shall never rise again; but this is a frequent word used to signify the death of man both in the Old Testament and in the New, because he only lies down in the grave for a season, as in a bed of sleep, in order to awake and arise hereafter.

III. In other places of this book, Job gives us some eminent hints of his hope of a resurrection, especially that divine passage and prophecy, when he spake as one surrounded with a vision of glory, and filled with the light and the joy of faith; Job xix. 25, 27. *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.* But in many parts of this book the good man lets us know, that he had no manner of hope of any restoration to health and peace in this life; Job vii. 6, 7, 8. *My days—are spent without hope:—my eye shall no more see good: the eye of him that hath seen me shall see me no more: thy eyes are upon me, and I am not.* Verse 21. *Now shall I sleep in the dust, and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be.* Job xvii. 15. *Where is now my hope? As for my hope, who shall see it?* He and his hope seemed *to go down to the bars of the pit together, and to rest in the dust.* And if Job had no hope of a restoration in this world, then his hopes must point to the resurrection of the dead.

IV. If we turn these verses here, as well as that noble passage in *Job* xix. to the more evangelical sense of a resurrection, the truths which are contained in the one and the other are all supported by the language of the New Testament; and the express words of both these texts are much more naturally and easily applied to the evangelical sense, without any strain and difficulty. The expressions of Job in chapter xix. *I know that my Redeemer liveth,* have been rescued by many wise interpreters from that poor and low sense which has been forced upon them, by those who will not allow Job to have any prospect beyond this life; and it has been made to appear to be a bright glimpse of divine light and joy, a ray or vision of the sun of righteousness breaking in between the dark clouds of his pressing sorrow: And that the words of my text demand the same sort of interpretation, will appear further by these short remarks, and this paraphrase upon them. Job had been speaking, verses 7—10, &c. That *there is hope of a tree when it is cut down, that it will sprout again visibly, and bring forth boughs; but* when *man gives up the ghost,* he is no more visible upon earth: *Where is he?* Job does not deny his future existence, but only intimates that he does not appear in the place where he was; and in the following verses he does not say, a dying man shall never rise, or shall never be awakened out of his sleep, but asserts that he rises not till the dissolution of these heavens and these visible things: And by calling death a sleep, he supposes an awaking time, though it may be distant and far off.

Then he proceeds to long for death, *O that thou wouldst hide me in the grave! that thou wouldst keep me secret till thy wrath be past!* till these times and seasons of sorrow be ended, which seems to be the effect of divine wrath or anger: But then I entreat thou wouldst appoint me a set time for my tarrying in the grave, and remember me in order to raise me again. Then, with a sort of surprise of faith and pleasure, he adds, *if a man die shall he live again?* Shall these dry bones live? And he answers in the language of hope: *All the days of that appointed time of* thine *I will wait till that glorious change shall come.* Thou shalt call from heaven, and I will answer thee from the dust of death. I will appear at thy call, and say, *Here am I: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thy hands,* to raise me again from the dead, whom thou hast made of clay, and fashioned me into life. From the words thus expounded, we may draw these several observations, and make a short reflection upon each of them as we pass along.

Observation I. This world is a place wherein good men are exposed to great calamities, and they are ready to think the anger or wrath of God appears in them.

II. The grave is God's known hiding-place for his people.

III. God has appointed a set time in his own counsels for all his children to continue in death.

IV. The lively view of a happy resurrection, and a well-grounded hope of this blessed change, is a solid and divine comfort to the saints of God, under all trials of every kind, both in life and death.

V. The saints of God who are resting in their beds of dust, will arise joyfully at the call of their heavenly Father.

VI. God takes delight in his works of nature, but much more when they are dignified and adorned by the operations of divine grace.

VII. How much are we indebted to God for the revelation of the New Testament, which teaches us to find out the blessings which are contained in the Old, and to fetch out the glories and treasures which are concealed there!

Let us dwell awhile upon each of these, and endeavour to improve them by a particular application.

Observation I. "This world is a place wherein good men are exposed to great calamities, and they are ready to think the anger or wrath of God appears in them." This mortal life, and this present state of things, as surrounded with crosses and disappointments, the loss of our dearest friends, as well as our own pains and sicknesses, have so much anguish and misery attending them, that they seem to be the seasons of divine wrath, and they grieve and pain the spirit of many a pious man, under a sense of the anger of his God. It must be confessed in general, that misery is the effect of sin, for sin and sorrow came into the world together. It is granted also, that God sometimes afflicts his people in anger, and corrects them in his hot displeasure, when they have sinned against him in a remarkable manner: but this is not always the case.

The great God was not really angry with Job when he suffered him to fall into such complicated distresses; for it is plain, that while he delivered him up into the hands of Satan to be afflicted, he vindicates and honours him with a divine testimony concerning his piety; Job i. 8. *There is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and avoideth evil.* Nor was he angry with his Son Jesus Christ, when *it pleased the Father to bruise him and put him to grief, when he made his soul an offering for sin, and he was stricken, smitten of God and afflicted;* Isaiah liii. 4, 10. To these

we may add Paul, the best of the apostles, and the greatest of christians, who was abundant in labours and sufferings above all the rest. See a dismal catalogue of his calamities, 2 *Cor.* xi. 23—27. What variety of wretchedness, what terrible persecutions from men, what repeated strokes of distress came upon him by the providence of God, which appeared like the effects of divine wrath or anger! But they were plainly designed for more divine and blessed purposes, both with regard to God, with regard to himself, and to all the succeeding ages of the christian church.

God does not always smite his own people to punish sin, and shew his anger; but these sufferings are often appointed for the trial of their christian virtues and graces, for the exercise of their humility and their patience, for the proof of their stedfastness in religion, for the honour of the grace of God in them, and for the increase of their own future weight of glory. *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him;* James i. 12.—*The devil shall cast some of you into prison, that you may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life;* Rev. ii. 10. *Our light afflictions which are but for a moment, are working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;* 2 Cor. iv. 17. However, upon the whole, this world is a very painful and troublesome place to the children of God: They are subject here to many weaknesses and sins, temptations and follies; they are in danger of new defilements; they go through many threatening perils and many real sorrows, which either are the effects of the displeasure of God, or, at least, carry an appearance of divine anger in them: But there is a time when these shall be finished, and sorrow shall have its last period: There is a time when these calamities will be overpassed, and shall return no more for ever.

Reflection. "Why then, O my soul, why shouldest thou be so fond of dwelling in this present world? Why shouldst thou be desirous of a long continuance in it? Hast thou never found sorrows and afflictions enough among the scenes of life, to make thee weary of them? And when sorrow and sin have joined together, have they not grievously embittered this life unto thee? Wilt thou never be weaned from these sensible scenes of flesh and blood? Hast thou such a love to the darknesses, the defilements, and the uneasinesses which are found in such a prison as this is, as to make thee unwilling to depart when God shall call? Hast thou dwelt so long in this tabernacle of clay, and dost thou not *groan, being burdened?* Hast thou no desire to a release into that upper and better world, where sorrows, sins, and temptations have no place, and where there shall never be the least appearance or suspicion of the displeasure of thy God towards thee?"

Observation II, "The grave is God's known hiding-place for his people:" It is his appointed shelter and retreat for his favourites, when he finds them overpressed either with present dangers or calamities, or when he foresees huge calamities and dangers, like storms and billows, ready to overtake them; Isaiah lvii. 1. *The righteous is taken away from the evil to come.* God our heavenly Father beholds this evil advancing forward through all the pleasant smiles of nature, and all the peaceful circumstances that surround us. He hides his children in the grave from a thousand sins, and sorrows, and distresses of this life, which they foresaw not: And even when they are actually beset behind and before, so that there seems to be no natural way for their escape, God calls them aside into the chambers of death, in the same sort of language as he uses in another case; Isaiah xxvi. 20. *Come my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy*

doors about thee, hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpassed.

And yet perhaps it is possible that this very language of the Lord in Isaiah may refer to the grave, as God's hiding-place, for the verse before promises a resurrection. *Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise: Awake and sing ye that dwell in the dust: For thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.* And if we may suppose this last verse to have been transposed by any ancient transcribers, so as to have followed originally verse 20, or 21, it is very natural then to interpret the whole paragraph concerning death, as God's hiding-place for his people, and their rising again through the virtue of the resurrection of Christ as their joyful release. Many a time God is pleased to shorten the labours, and travels, and fatigues of good men in this wilderness, and he opens a door of rest to them where he pleases, and perhaps surprises them into a state of safety and peace, *where the weary are at rest, and the wicked cease from troubling;* and holy Job seems to desire this favour from his Maker here; *Job* iii. 17.

Sometimes indeed, in the history of this book, he seems to break out into these desires in too rude and angry a manner of expression; and in a fit of criminal impatience he murmurs against God for upholding him in the land of the living: But at other times, as in this text, he represents his desires, with more decency and submission. Every desire to die is not to be construed sinful and criminal. Nature may ask of God, a relief from its agonies and a period to its sorrows, nor does grace utterly forbid it, if there be also an humble submission and resignation to the will of God, such as we find exemplified by our blessed Saviour, *Father, if it be thy will, let this cup pass from me; yet not as I will, but as thou wilt;* Matt. xxvi. 39, 42. On this second observation I desire to make these three reflections:

Reflection I. Though a good man knows that death was originally appointed as a curse for sin, yet his faith can trust God to turn that curse into a blessing: He can humbly ask his Maker to release him from the painful bonds of life, to hasten the slow approaches of death, and to hide him in the grave from some overwhelming sorrows. This is the glory of God in his covenant of grace with the children of men, that he *turns curses into blessings;* Deut. xxiii. 5. And the grave which was designed as a prison for sinners, is become a place of shelter to the saints, where they are hidden and secured from rising sorrows and calamities. It is God's known hiding-place for his own children from the envy and the rage of men, from all the known and unknown agonies of nature, the diseases of the flesh, and the distresses of human life, which perhaps might be overbearing and intolerable.

" Why, O my fearful soul, why shouldst thou be afraid of dying? Why shouldst thou be frighted at the dark shadows of the grave, when thou art weary with the toils and crosses of the day? Hast thou not often desired *the shadow of the evening*, and longed for the bed of natural sleep, where thy fatigues and thy sorrows may be forgotten for a season? And is not the grave itself a sweet sleeping-place for the saints, wherein they lie down and forget their distresses, and feel none of the miseries of human life, and especially since it is softened and sanctified by the Son of God lying down there? Why shouldst thou be afraid to lay thy head in the dust? It is but entering into God's hiding-place, into his chambers of rest and repose: It is but committing thy flesh, the meaner part of thy composition, to his care in the dark for a short season: He will hide thee

there, and keep thee in safety from the dreadful trials which perhaps would overwhelm thy spirit. Sometimes in the course of his providence he may find it necessary, that some spreading calamity should overtake the place where thou dwellest, or some distressing stroke fall upon thy family, or thy friends, but he will hide thee under ground before it comes, and thus disappoint all thy fears, and lay every perplexing thought into rest and silence.

II. Let it be ever remembered, that the grave is *God's hiding-place* and not our own: We are to venture into it without terror when he calls us; but he does not suffer us to break into it our own way without his call. Death and life are in the hands of God, and he never gave the keys of them to mortal men to let themselves out of this world when they please, nor to enter into his hiding-place without his leave.

" Bear up then, O my soul, under all the sorrows and trials of this present state till God himself shall say, *It is finished;* John xix. 20. till our blessed Jesus, who has the keys put into his hands, shall open the door of death, and give thee an entrance into that dark and peaceful retreat. It is a safe and silent refuge from the bustle and the noise, the labours and the troubles of life; but he that forces it open with his own hands, how will he dare to appear before God in the world of spirits? What will he answer, when with a dreadful frown the great God shall demand of him, *Friend, how camest thou in hither?* Matt. xxii. 12. Who sent for thee, or gave thee leave to come? Such a wretch must venture upon so rash an action at the peril of the wrath of God, and his own eternal destruction. Our blessed Jesus, who has all the vast scheme of divine counsels before his eyes, by having the books of his Father's decrees put into his hands, he knows how long it is proper for thee, O christian, to fight and labour, to wrestle and strive with sins, temptations and difficulties in the present life: He knows best in what moment to put a period to them, and to pronounce thee conqueror. Fly not from the field of battle for want of holy fortitude, though thy enemies and thy dangers be never so many, nor dare to dismiss thyself from thy appointed post, till the Lord of life pronounce the word of thy dismission.

" Sometimes I have been ready to say within myself, Why is my life prolonged in sorrow? Why are my days lengthened out to see further wretchedness? Methinks *the grave should be ready for me, and the house appointed for all the living;* Job xvii. 1. xxx. 23. What can I do further for God or for man here on earth, since my nature pines away with painful sickness, my nerves are unstrung, my spirits dissipated, and my best powers of acting are enfeebled and almost lost? Peace, peace, O thou complaining spirit! Dost thou know the counsels of the Almighty, and the secret designs of thy God and Saviour? He has many deep and unknown purposes in continuing his children amidst heavy sorrows, which they can never penetrate or learn in this world. Silence and submission becomes thee at all times. *Father, not my will but thy will be done;* Luke xxii. 42.

" And let it be hinted to thee, O my soul, that it is much more honourable to be weary of this life, because of the sins and temptations of it, than because of the toils and sorrows that attend it. If we must *groan in this tabernacle being burdened;* 2 Cor. v. 4. let the snares, and the dangers, and the defilements of it be the chief springs of thy groaning and the warmest motives to request a release. God loves to see his people more afraid of sin than of sorrow. If thy corruptions are so strong, and the temptations of life

so unhappily surround thee, that thou art daily crying out, *Who shall deliver thee from the body of sin and death;* Rom. vii. 24. then thou mayest more honourably send up a wish to heaven, *O that I had the wings of a dove, that I might fly away and be at rest!* Psalm lv. 6. *O that God would hide me in the grave* from my prevailing iniquities, and from the ruffling and disquieting influence of my own follies and my daily temptations! But never be thou quite weary of doing or suffering the will of thy heavenly Father, though he should continue thee in this mortal life a length of years beyond thy desires, and should withhold thee from his secret place of retreat and rest." A constant and joyful readiness at the call of God to depart hence, with a cheerful patience to continue here during his pleasure, is the most perfect and blessed temper that a christian can arrive at: It gives God the highest glory, and keeps the soul in the sweetest peace.

III. This one thought, that the "grave is God's hiding-place," should compose our spirits to silence, and abate our mourning for the loss of friends, who have given sufficient evidence that they are the children of God. Their heavenly Father has seized them from the midst of their trials, dangers and difficulties, and given them a secure refuge in his own appointed place of rest and safety. Jesus has opened the door of the grave with his golden key, and hath let them into a chamber of repose: He has concealed them in a silent retreat, where temptation and sin cannot reach them, and where anguish and misery never come.

When I have lost therefore a dear and delightful relative or friend, or perhaps many of them in a short season are called successively down to the dust, let me say thus within myself, "It is their God and my God has done it: He saw what new temptations were ready to surround them in the circumstances of life wherein they stood: He beheld the trials and difficulties that were ready to encompass them on all sides, and his love made a way for their escape: He opened the dark retreat of death, and hid them there from a thousand perils which might have plunged them into guilt and defilement: He beheld this as the proper season to give them a release from a world of labour and toil, vanity and vexation, sin and sorrow: *They are taken away from the evil to come,* and I will learn to complain no more. The blessed Jesus, to whom they had devoted themselves, well knew what allurements of gaiety and joy might have been too prevalent over them, and he gave them a kind escape lest their souls should suffer any real detriment, lest their strict profession of piety should be soiled or dishonoured: He knew how much they were able to bear, and he would *lay upon them no further burden:* He saw rising difficulties approaching, and new perils coming upon them beyond their strength, and he fulfils his own promises, and glorifies his own faithfulness, by opening the door of his well-known hiding-place, and giving them a safe refuge there.. He keeps them there in secret from the corruptions of a public life, and the multiplied dangers of a degenerate age, which might have divided their hearts from God and things heavenly: And perhaps he guards them also in that dark retreat from some long and languishing sickness, some unknown distress, some overbearing flood of misery, which was like to come upon them had they continued longer on the stage of life.

"Let this silence thy murmuring thoughts, O my soul! let this dry up thy tears, which are ready to overflow on such an occasion. Dare not pronounce it a stroke of anger from the hand of God, who divided them from the tempting or distressing scenes of this world, and kindly removed them out of the way of danger. This was the wisest method of his love, to guard them from many a folly and many a sorrow, which he fore-

saw just at the door." Will the wounded and complaining heart go on to groan and murmur still, "But my son was carried off in the prime of life, or my daughter in her blooming years; they stood flourishing in the vigour of their nature, and it was my delight to behold their growing appearances of virtue and goodness, and that in the midst of ease and plenty, and prospects of happiness, so far as this world can afford it?" But could you look through the next year to the end of it? Could you penetrate into future events, and survey the scenes of seven years to come? Could your heart assure itself of the real possession of this imaginary view of happiness and peace? Perhaps the blessed God saw the clouds gathering afar off, and at a great distance of time, and in much kindness he housed your favourite from unknown trials, dangers, and sorrows. So a prudent gardener, who is acquainted with the sky, and skilful in the signs of the seasons, even in the month of May, foresees a heavy tempest rising in the edge of the horizon, while a vulgar eye observes nothing but sunshine; and he who knows the worth and the tenderness of some special plants in his garden, houses them in haste, lest they be exposed and demolished by the sweeping rain or hail.

You say, "These children were in the bloom of life, and in the most desirable appearance of joy and satisfaction:" But is not that also usually the most dangerous season of life, and the hour of most powerful temptation? Was not that the time when their passions might have been too hard for them, and the deluding pleasures of life stood round them with a most perilous assault? And what if God, out of pure compassion, saw it necessary to hide them from an army of perils at once, and to carry them off the stage of life with more purity and honour? Surely, when the great God has appointed it, when the blessed Jesus has done it, we would not rise up in opposition and say, "But I would have had them live longer here at all adventures: I wish they were alive again, let the consequence be what it will:" This is not the voice of faith or patience; this is not the language of holy submission and love to God, nor can our souls approve of such irregular storms of ungoverned affection, which oppose themselves to the divine will, and ruffle the soul with criminal disquietude.

There are many, even of the children of God, who had left a more unblemished and a more honourable character behind them, if they had died much sooner. The latter end of life hath sometimes sullied their brightness, and tarnished the glory they had acquired in a hopeful youth: Their growing years have fallen under such temptations, and been defiled and disgraced by such failings, as would have been entirely prevented had they been summoned away into God's hiding-place some years before. Our blessed Jesus *walks among the* roses and *lilies* in the garden of his church, and when he sees a wintry storm coming upon some tender *plants of righteousness*, he hides them in the earth to preserve life in them, that they may bloom with new glories when they shall be raised from that bed. The blessed God acts like a tender Father, and consults the safety and the honour of his children, when the hand of his mercy snatches them away before that powerful temptation comes, which he foresees would have defiled and distressed, and almost destroyed them. They are not lost, but they are gone to rest a little sooner than we are. Peace be to that bed of dust where they are hidden, by the hand of their God, from unknown dangers! Blessed be our Lord Jesus, who has the keys of the grave, and never opens it for his favourites but in the wisest season!

III. "God has appointed a set time in his own counsels for all his children to con-

tinue in death:" Those whom he has hidden in the grave he remembers they lie there, and he will not suffer them to abide in the dust for ever. When Job intreats of God that he may be hidden from his sorrows in the dust of death, he requests also that God would appoint a set time for his release, and remember him. His faith seems to have had a glimpse of the blessed resurrection. Our senses and our carnal passions would cry out, where is Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the rest of the ancient worthies, who have been long sleepers in their beds of repose for many thousand years? But faith assures us, that God numbers the days and the months of the concealment under ground, he knows where their dust lies, and where to find every scattered atom against the great restoring day. They are unseen indeed, and forgotten of men, but then they are under the eye and the keeping of the blessed God: He watches over their sleeping dust, and while the world has forgotten and lost even their names, they are every moment under the eye of God, for they stand written in his book of life, with the name of the Lamb at the head of them. Jesus, his Son, had but three days appointed him to dwell in this hiding-place, and he rose again at the appointed hour. Other good men, who were gone to their grave not long before him, arose again at the resurrection of Christ, and made a visit to many in Jerusalem: Their appointed hiding-place was but for a short season; and all the children of God shall be remembered in their proper seasons in faithfulness to his Son to whom he has given them: The head is raised to the mansions of glory, and the members must not for ever lie in dust.

Reflection. Then let all the saints of God wait with patience for the appointed time, when he will call them down to death, and let them lie down in their secret beds of repose, and in a waiting frame commit their dust to his care till the resurrection. *All the days of my appointed time*, says Job, *I will wait till my change come.* The word appointed time, is supposed to signify "warfare" in the *Hebrew:* As a centinel, when he is fixed to his post by his general, he waits there till he has orders for a release. And this clause of the verse may refer either to dying or rising again, for either of them is a very great and important change, passing upon human nature, whether from life to death, or from death to life. It is said by the prophet Isaiah, chapter xxviii. 16. *He that believeth shall not make haste;* that is, he that trusteth in the wisdom and the promised mercy of God, will not be too urgent or importunate in any of his desires: It is for want of faith that nature sometimes is in too much haste to die, as Job in some of his expressions appears to have been, or as Elijah perhaps discovered himself when he was wandering in the wilderness, disconsolate and almost despairing; or as the prophet Jeremiah sufficiently manifested, when he cursed the day of his birth; or as Jonah was, that peevish prophet, when he was angry with God for not taking away his life; but the ground of it was, he was vexed because God did not destroy Nineveh, according to his prophecy: These are certain blemishes of the children of God left upon record in his word, to give us warning of our danger of impatience, and to guard us against their sins and follies. And since we know that God has appointed the seasons of our entrance into death, and into the state of the resurrection, we should humbly commit the disposal of ourselves to the hand of our God, who will bestow upon us the most needful blessings in the most proper season.

Do not *the spirits of the just made perfect* wait in patience for the great and blessed rising day which God has appointed, and for the illustrious change of their bodies from corruption and darkness to light, and life, and glory? God has promised it, and that

suffices, and supports their waiting spirits, though they know not the hour. *The Father keeps that in his own hand;* Acts i. 7. and perhaps reveals it to none but his Son Jesus, who is exalted to be the governor and judge of the world. There are millions of souls waiting in that separate state for the accomplishment of these last and best promises, ready to shout and rejoice when they shall see and feel that bright morning dawning upon them.

"Wait therefore, O my soul, as becomes a child of God in the wilderness among many trials, darknesses, and distresses. He has stripped thee perhaps of one comfort after another, and thy friends and relatives in succession are called down to the dust; they are released from their conflicts, and are placed far out of the reach of every temptation; and it is not thy business to prescribe to God at what hour he shall release thee also. Whensoever he is pleased to call thee to lay down thy flesh in the dust, and to enter into God's hiding-place, meet thou the summons with holy courage, satisfaction, and joy; *enter into the chamber* of rest till all the days of sin, sorrow, and wretchedness, are overpassed: Lie down there in a waiting frame, and commit thy flesh to his care and keeping, till the hour in which he has appointed thy glorious change."

IV. "The lively view of a happy resurrection, and a well-grounded hope of this blessed change, is a solid and divine comfort to the saints of God, under all trials of every kind, both in life and death." The faith and hope of a joyful rising-day has supported the children of God under long distresses and huge agonies of sorrow which they sustain here. It is the expectation of this desirable day, that animates the soul with vigour and life to fulfil every painful and dangerous duty. It is for this we expose ourselves to the bitter reproaches and persecutions of the wicked world; it is for this that we conflict with all our adversaries on earth, and all the powers of darkness that are sent from hell to annoy us; it is this joyful expectation that bears up our spirits under every present burden and calamity of life. What could we do in such a painful and dying world, or how could we bear with patience the long fatigues of such a wretched life, if we had no hope of rising again from the dead? Surely, *we are the most miserable of all men* in the days of public persecution, *if we had hope only in this life;* 1 Cor. xv. 19. It is for this that *we labour, and suffer, and endure* whatsoever our heavenly Father is pleased to lay upon us. It is this confirms our fortitude, and makes *us stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord;* 1 Cor. xv. 58. It is this that enables us to bear the loss of our dearest friends with patience and hope, and assuages the smart of our sharpest sorrows: For since *we believe that Jesus died and rose again,* so we rejoice in hope, that *they which sleep in Jesus shall be brought with him* at his return, and shall appear in brighter and more glorious circumstances than ever our eyes were blessed with here on earth; 1 *Thess.* iv. 13, 14. This teaches us to triumph over death and the grave in divine language—*O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?* 1 Cor. xv. 55.

Reflection. "What are thy chief burdens, O my soul? Whence are all thy sighs and thy daily groanings? What are thy distresses of flesh or spirit? Summon them all in one view, and see whether there be not power and glory enough in a resurrection to conquer and silence them all, and to put thy present sorrows to flight? Dost thou dwell in a vexing and persecuting world, amongst oppressions and reproaches? But those who reproach and oppress are but mortal creatures, who shall shortly go down to the dust,

and then they shall tyrannize and afflict thee no more: The great rising-day shall change the scene from oppression and reproach to dominion and glory. When *they lie down in the grave like beasts* of slaughter, *death shall feed on them, and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning, when God shall redeem thy soul from the power of the grave;* Psalm xlix. 14, 15. Thy God shall hide thy body from their rage in his own appointed resting-place, and he shall receive thy soul, and keep it secure in his own presence, till that blessed morning break upon this lower creation; then shalt thou *arise and shine, for the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee;* Isaiah lx. 1.

" Do the calamities which thou sufferest proceed from the hand of God? Art thou disquieted with daily pain, with sicknesses and anguish in thy flesh? Or art thou surrounded with crosses and disappointments in thy outward circumstances? Are thy spirits sunk with many loads of care and pressing perplexities? Canst thou not forget them all in the vision that faith can give thee of the great rising-day? Canst thou not say in the language of faith—*The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us;* Rom. viii. 18. Then the head and the heart shall ache no more, and every circumstance around thee shall be pleasing and joyful for ever.

" Or art thou tenderly affected with the loss of pious friends, who have been very dear and desirable? Perhaps thy sensibilities here are too great and painful: They are such indeed as nature is ready to indulge, but are they not more than God requires, or the gospel allows? Do not thy thoughts dwell too much on the gloom and darkness of the grave? O think of that bright hour, when every saint shall rise from the dark retreats of death with more complete characters of beauty, holiness, and pleasure, than ever this world could shew them in! They are not perished, but sent a little before us into God's hiding-place, where though they lie in dust and darkness, yet they are safe from the dangers and vexations of life; but they shall spring up in the happy moment into immortality, and shall join with thee in a mutual surprise at each other's divine change.

" Or dost thou feel the corruptions of thy heart working within thee, and the sins of thy nature restless in their endeavours to bring defilement upon thy soul, and guilt upon thy conscience: Go on and maintain the holy warfare against all these rising iniquities. This thy warfare shall not continue long: Thou shalt find every one of these sins buried with thee in the grave, but they shall arise to assault thee no more. The saint shall leave every sin behind him when he breaks out of the dust at the summons of Christ, and thou shalt find no seeds of iniquity in thy body when it is raised from the grave. Holiness to the Lord shall be inscribed upon all thy powers for ever.

" Or art thou perplexed, O my soul, at the near prospect of death, and all the terrors and dismal appearances that surround it? Art thou afraid to lie down in the cold and noisome grave? Does thy nature shudder at it as a gloomy place of horror? These indeed are the prejudices of sense; but the language of faith will tell thee, it is only God's hiding-place, where he secures his saints till all the ages of sin and sorrow are overpassed. Look forward to the glorious morning when thou shalt rise from the dust among ten thousand of thy fellows, every one in the image of the Son of God, with their bodies formed *after the likeness of his glorious body;* Phil. iii. 21. and rejoicing together with divine satisfaction in the pleasure of this heavenly change. Try whether the meditation of these glories, and the distant prospect of this illustrious day, will not scatter all the gloom that hovers round the grave, and vanquish the fiercest appearance of the king of terrors. What is there, O my soul, among all the miseries thou hast felt, or all that

thou fearest, that can sink thy courage, if the faith of a resurrection be but alive and wakeful?" But this leads me to the

V. "The saints of God, who are resting in their beds of dust, will arise joyfully at the call of their heavenly Father." *Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee*, said holy Job. The command of God creates life, and gives power to the dead to arise and speak. "I come, O Lord, I come." When Jesus, the Son of God, as with the trumpet of an archangel, shall pronounce the word which he spake to Lazarus, *Arise, and come forth*, John xi. 43. dust and rottenness shall hear the call from heaven, and the clods of corruption all round the earth shall arise into the form of man: The saints shall appear at once and answer to that divine call, arrayed in a glory like that of angels; an illustrious host of martyrs and confessors for the truth; an army of heroes and valiant sufferers for the name and cause of God and his Son; an innumerable multitude of faithful servants, who have finished their work, and lay down at rest.

How shall Adam, the father of our race, together with the holy men of his day, be surprised, when they shall awake out of their long sleep of five thousand years? How shall all the saints of the intermediate ages break from their beds of darkness with intense delight? And those who lay down but yesterday in the dust, shall start up at once with their early ancestors, and answer to the call of Jesus from one end of time to the other, and from all the ends of the earth. They shall arise together to *meet the Lord in the air, that they may be for ever with the Lord;* 1 Thess. iv. 17. Never was any voice obeyed with more readiness and joy, than the voice or trumpet of the great archangel, summoning all the children of God to awake from their long slumbers, and to leave their dusty beds behind them, with all the seeds of sin and sorrow, which are buried and lost there for ever. Never did any army on earth march with more speed and pleasure, at the sound of the trumpet, to attend their general to a new triumph, than this glorious assembly shall arise to meet their returning Lord, when this last trumpet sounds, and when he shall *come the second time* in the full glories of his person and his offices, as Lord and Judge of the world, to bring his faithful followers into complete salvation.

Reflection. "Whensoever, O my soul, thou feelest any reluctance to obey the summons of death, encourage thy faith, and scatter thy fears, by waiting for the call of God to a blessed resurrection. Jesus himself lay down in the grave at his Father's command, and he arose with joy at the appointed hour as the head of the new creation, as *the first-born from the dead;* and he has orders given him by the Father to summon every saint from their graves at the long-appointed hour. Because Jesus arose, and lives, they shall arise and live also. O may my flesh lie down in the dust with all courage and composure, and rejoice to escape into a place of rest and silence, far away from the noise and tumult, the hurry and bustle of this present life; being well assured, that the next sound which shall be heard is the voice of the Son of God, *arise, ye dead!* Make haste then, O blessed Jesus, and finish thy divine work here on earth: I lay down my head to sleep in the dust, waiting for thy call to awake in the morning."

VI. "God takes delight in his works of nature, but much more when they are dignified and adorned by the operations of divine grace." *Thou wilt have a desire*, saith the good man in my text, *to the work of thy own hands.* Thou hast moulded me and fashioned me at first by thy power, thou hast new created me by thy Spirit, and though thou hidest me for a season in one of thy secret chambers of death, thou wilt raise me again to light and life, *and in my flesh shall I see God.*

When the Almighty had created this visible world, he surveyed his works on the seventh day, and pronounced them all good, and he took delight in them all before sin entered and defiled them: And when he has delivered the creatures of his power from the bondage of corruption, and has purged our souls and our bodies from sin and from every evil principle, he will again delight in the sons and daughters of Adam, whom he has thus cleansed and refined by his sovereign grace, and has qualified and adorned them for his own presence. *He will sing and rejoice over them, and rest in his love;* Zep. iii. 17. He will love to see them with his Son Jesus at their head, diffusing holiness and glory through all his members. Jesus the Redeemer will love to see them round him, for he has bought them with his blood, and they are a treasure too precious to be for ever lost. He will rejoice to behold them rising at his call into a splendour like his own, and they *shall be satisfied when they awake from death into his likeness;* Psalm xvii. 15. and appear in the image of *his own glorious body*, fit heirs for the inheritance of heaven, fit companions for the blessed angels of light, and prepared to dwell for ever with himself.

Reflection. And shall not we who are the *work of his hands*, have a desire to him that made us? To him that redeemed us? To him that has new created and moulded us into his own likeness! Do we not long to see him? Have we no desire to be with him, even though we should *be absent from the body* for a season? But much more should we delight to think of being *present with the Lord*, when our whole natures, body and soul, shall appear as the new workmanship of almighty power; our souls new created in the image of God, and our bodies new born from the dead into a life of immortality; 2 *Cor.* v. 8.

VII. The last observation is of a very general nature, and spreads itself through all my text, and that is, "How much are we indebted to God for the revelation of the New Testament, which teaches us to find out the blessings which are contained in the Old, and to fetch out the glories and treasures which are concealed there?" The writers of the gospel have not only pointed us to the rich mines where these treasures lie, but have brought forth many of the jewels and set them before us. *It is this gospel that brings life and immortality to light by Jesus Christ;* 2 Tim. i. 10. It is this gospel that scatters the gloom and darkness which was spread over the face of the grave, and illuminates all the chambers of death. Who could have found out the doctrine of the resurrection, contained in that word of grace given to Abraham, I am thy God, if Jesus, the great prophet, had not taught us to explain it thus; Matt. xxii. 31. *God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.*

We who have the happiness to live in the days of the Messiah, know more than all the ancient prophets were acquainted with, and understand the word of their prophecies better than they themselves; for they *searched what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which should follow;* 1 Pet. i. 11. But we read all this fairly written in the gospel. Do you think that good David could have explained some of his own Psalms into so divine a sense, or Isaiah given such a bright account of his own words of prophecy, as St. Paul has done in several places of the New Testament, where he cites and unfolds them? Could those illustrious ancients have given us such *abundant consolation and hope through the scriptures*, which they themselves wrote aforetime, as this apostle has done? *Rom.* xv. 4. Do you think Job could have read us such a lecture on his own expressions in this text, or in that bright prophecy in the xix. chapter, as the very

meanest among the ministers of the gospel can do by the help of the New Testament? For in point of clear discoveries of divine truths and graces, *the least in the kingdom of the Messiah is greater than John the baptist and all the prophets;* and our blessed Jesus has told us so, *Matt.* xi. 11, 13. And by the aid and influences of his Spirit we may be taught yet farther to search into these hidden mines of grace, and bring forth new treasures of glory.

Reflection. "Awake, O my soul, and bless the Lord with all thy powers, and give thanks with holy joy for the gospel of his Son Jesus. It is Jesus, by his rising from the dead, has left a divine light upon the gates of the grave, and scattered much of the darkness that surrounded it. It is the gospel of Christ which casts a glory even upon the bed of death, and spreads a brightness upon the graves of the saints in the lively views of a great rising-day. O blessed and surprising prospect of faith! O illustrious scenes of future vision and transport! When the Son of God shall bring forth to public view all his redeemed ones, who had been long hidden in night and dust, and shall present them all to God the Father in his own image, bright, and holy, and unblemished, in the midst of all the splendours of the resurrection! O blessed and joyful voice, when he shall say with divine pleasure, *Here am I, and the children which thou hast given me;* Isaiah viii. 18. Heb. ii. 13. We have both passed through the grave, and I have made them all conquerors of death, and vested them with immortality, according to thy divine commission! *Thine they were, O Father, and thou hast given them into my hands,* and behold I have brought them all safe to thy appointed mansions, and I present them before thee *without spot or blemish;*" John xvii. 6.

And many a parent of a pious household in that day, when they shall see their sons and their daughters around them, all arrayed with the beams of the Son of righeousness, shall echo with holy joy to the voice of the blessed Jesus, "*Lord, here am I, and the children which thou hast given me;* Heb. ii. 13. I was afraid, as Job once might be when his friends suggested this fear; I was afraid that my *children had sinned against God, and he had cast them away for their transgression;* Job viii. 4. But I am now convinced, when he seized them from my sight, he only took them out of the way of temptation and danger, and concealed them for a season in his safe hiding-place: I mourned in the daytime for a lost son or a lost daughter, and in the night my couch was bedewed with my tears: I was scared with midnight dreams on their account, and the visions of the grave terrified me, because my children were there: I gave up myself to sorrow, for fear of the displeasure of my God both against them and against me: But how unreasonable were these sorrows! How groundless were my fears! How gloriously am I disappointed this blessed morning! I see my dear offspring called out of that long retreat where God had concealed them, and they arise to meet the divine call. I hear them answering with joy to the happy summons. My eyes behold them risen in the image of my God and their God; they are near me, they stand with me at the right hand of the Judge; now shall we rejoice together in the sentence of eternal blessedness from the lips of my Lord, my Redeemer and their Redeemer." *Amen.*

Among my papers I have found a speech spoken at a grave, which I transcribed almost fifty years ago, and which deserves to be saved from perishing. It was pronounced many years before at the funeral of a pious person, by a minister there present, supposed to be the Rev. Mr. Peter Sterry; *and the subject of it being suited to this discourse, I thought it not improper to preserve it here.*

"Christian friends, though *sin be entered into the world, and by sin death, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned;* Rom. v. 12. yet it seems not wholly suitable to our christian hope, to stand by and see the grave with open mouth take in, and swallow down any part of a precious saint, and not bring some testimony against the devourer. And yet that our witness may be in righteousness, we must first own, acknowledge, and accept of that good and serviceableness that is in it.

"For through the death and resurrection of our dear Redeemer, death and the grave are become sweetened to us, and sanctified for us: So that as death is but a sleep, the grave, through his lying down in it and rising again, is become as a bed of repose to them that are in him, and a safe and quiet hiding-place for his saints till the resurrection.

"And in this respect we do for ourselves, and for this our dearly beloved in the Lord, accept of thee, O grave, and readily deliver up her body to thee; it is a body that hath been weakened and wearied with long affliction and anguish, we freely give it into thee; receive it, and let it have in thee a quiet rest from all its labours; for thus we read it written of thee, *There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary be at rest;* Job iii. 17.

"Besides, it is, O grave, a body that hath been sweetly embalmed by a virtuous, pious, peaceable conversation, by several inward openings and out-pourings of the Spirit of life, by much patience and meekness in strong trials and afflictions: Receive it, and let it enjoy in thee, what was once deeply impressed on her own heart, and in a due season written out with her own hand, a sabbath in the grave: For thus also we find it recorded of our Lord and her Lord, that he enjoyed the rest of his last sabbath in the grave.

"But we know thee, O grave, to be also a devourer, and yet we can freely deliver up the body into thee. There was in it a contracted corruptibility, dishonour and weakness; take them as thy proper prey, they belong to thee, and we would not withhold them from thee: Freely swallow them up for ever, that they may appear no more.

"Yet know, O grave, there is in the body, considered as once united to such a soul, a divine relation to the Lord of life; and this thou must not, thou canst not dissolve or destroy. But know, and even before thee, and over thee be it spoken, that there is a season hastening wherein we shall expect it again from thee in incorruption, honour and power.

"We now sow into thee in dishonour, but expect it again returned from thee in glory; we now sow it into thee in weakness, we expect it again in power; we now sow it into thee a natural body, we look for it again from thee a spiritual body: 1 *Cor.* xv. 42—44.

"And when thou hast fulfilled that end for which the Prince of life, who took thee captive, made thee to serve, then shalt thou who hast devoured, be thyself also swallowed up; for thus it is written of thee, *O death, I will be thy plague, O grave, I will be thy destruction;* Hosea xiii. 14. And then shall we sing over thee what also is written of thee, *O death, where is now thy sting? O grave, where is now thy victory?* 1 Cor. xv. 55. *Amen.*"

Note, A line or two is altered in this speech, to suit it more to the understanding and the sense of the present age.

DISCOURSE XII.

THE NATURE OF THE PUNISHMENTS IN HELL.

MARK ix. 46.

WHERE THEIR WORM DIETH NOT, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.

INTRODUCTION.

THESE words are a short description of hell, by the lips of the Son of God, who came down from heaven: And he who lay in the bosom of his Father, and was intimate in all the counsels of his mercy and justice, must be supposed to know what the terrors and the wrath of God are, as well as his compassion and his goodness. It is confessed, that a discourse on this dreadful subject is not a direct ministration of grace, and the glad tidings of salvation, yet it has a great and happy tendency to the same end, even the salvation of sinful men; for it awakens them to a more piercing sight, and to a more keen sensation of their own guilt and danger; it possesses their spirits with a more lively sense of their misery, it fills them with a holy dread of divine punishment, and excites the powerful passion of fear to make them fly from the wrath to come, and betake themselves to the grace of God revealed in the gospel.

The blessed Saviour himself, who was the most perfect image of his Father's love, and the prime minister of his grace, publishes more of these terrors to the world, and preaches hell and damnation to sinners more than all the prophets or teachers that ever went before him; and several of the apostles imitate their Lord in this practice: They kindle the flames of hell in their epistles, they thunder through the very hearts and consciences of men with the voice of damnation and eternal misery, to make stupid sinners feel as much of these terrors in the present prospect as is possible, in order to escape the actual sensation of them in time to come. Such awful discourses are many times also of excellent use to keep the children of God, and the disciples of Jesus, in a holy and watchful frame, and to affright them from returning to sin and folly, and from the indulgence of any temptation, by setting these terrors of the Lord before their eyes. Oh! may these words of his terror, from the lips of one of the meanest of his ministers, be attended with divine power from the convincing and sanctifying Spirit, that they may answer these happy ends and purposes, that they may excite a solemn reverence of the dreadful majesty of God in all our souls, and awaken us to repentance for every sin, and a more watchful course of holiness?

Let us then consider the expression in my text: When our Saviour mentions the word hell, he adds, *where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched;* in which description we may read the nature of this punishment, and the perpetuity of it.

First, We shall consider the nature of this punishment, as it is represented by the metaphors which our Saviour uses; and if I were to give the most natural and proper sense of this representation, I would say that our Saviour might borrow this figure of speech from these three considerations:

1. Worms and fire are the two most general ways whereby the bodies of the dead are destroyed; for whether they are buried or not buried, worms devour those who by the custom of their country are not burned with fire: And perhaps he might refer to the words of *Isaiah* lxvi. 24. where the prophet seems to foretel the punishment of those who will not receive the gospel, when it shall be preached to all nations: They, says he, that is, the true Israel, the saints of God, or christians, *they shall go forth and look upon the carcases of the men who have transgressed against me, for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.* It is highly probable, that this is only a metaphor referring to the punishment of the souls of obstinate unbelievers in hell, for it would be but a very small punishment indeed, if only their dead bodies were devoured by worms or fire, or rather no punishment at all besides a memorial of their sin.

2. Consider, the gnawing of worms, and the burning of fire, are some of the most smart and severe torments that a living man can feel in the flesh; therefore the vengeance of God upon the souls of obstinate sinners, is set forth by it in our Saviour's discourse; and it was probably well known amongst the Jews, as appears by some of the apocryphal writings; *Judith* xvi. 17. "Woe to the nation that rises up against my kindred; the Lord almighty will take vengeance of them in the day of judgment, putting fire and worms in their flesh, and they shall feel them and weep for ever." And *Eccles.* vii. 16, 17. "Number not thyself among the multitude of sinners, but remember the wrath will not tarry long. Humble thy soul greatly, for the vengeance of the ungodly is fire and worms."

3. Consider, whether worms feed upon a living man or devour his dead body, still they are such as are bred in his own flesh: but fire is brought by other hands, and applied to the flesh: Even so this metaphor of a worm happily represents the inward torments, and the teazing and vexing passions which shall arise in the souls of those unhappy creatures, who are the just objects of this punishment; and it is called their worm, that worm that belongs to them, and is bred within them by the foul vices and diseases of their souls; But *the fire which shall never be quenched* refers rather to the pains and anguish which come from without, and that chiefly from the hand of God, the righteous avenger of sin, and from his indignation which is compared to fire.

SECTION I.

THE WORM THAT DIETH NOT.

Let us begin with the first of these, *viz.* the "torments which are derived from the gnawing worm, those agonies and uneasy passions which will arise and work in the souls of these wretched creatures," so far as we can collect them from the word of God, from the reason of things, and the working powers of human nature.

When an impenitent sinner is cast into hell, we have abundant reason to suppose, that the evil temper of his soul and the vicious principles within him are not abated, but his natural powers and the vices which have tainted them and mingle with them, are

awakened and enraged into intense activity and exercise, under the first sensations of his dreadful punishment. Let us endeavour to conceive then what would be the ferments, the raging passions, and the vexing inward torments of a wicked man, seized by the officers of an almighty Judge, borne away by the executioners of vengeance, and plunged into a pit of torture and smarting misery, while at the same time he had a most fresh and piercing conviction ever present, that he had brought all this mischief upon himself by his own guilt and folly.

I. The first particular piece of wretchedness therefore contained in this metaphor, is the "remorse and terrible anguish of conscience which shall never be relieved." How terrible are the racks of a guilty conscience here on earth, which arise from a sense of past sins? How does David cry out and roar under the disquietude of his spirit? Psalm xxxii. 3. *While I kept silence* and confessed not my iniquity, *my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long; day and night thy hand was heavy upon me, and my moisture is turned into the drought of summer:* And again, Psalm xxxviii. 4. *My iniquities are gone over my head, as a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me.* God has wisely so framed the nature and spirit of man, that a reflection on his past behaviour should raise such keen anguish at his heart; and thousands have felt it in a dreadful degree, even while they have continued in this world, in the land of life and hope.

But when death has divided the soul from this body, and from all the means of grace, and cut off all the hopes of pardoning mercy for ever, what smart beyond all our thoughts and expressions must the sinner feel from such inward wounds of conscience? And it gives a twinging accent to every sorrow when the sinner is constrained to cry out, "It is I, it is I who have brought all this upon myself. Life and death were set before me in the world where I once dwelt, but I refused the blessings of eternal life, and the offers of saving grace. I turned my back upon the ways of holiness which led to life, and renounced the tenders of divine mercy: I chose the paths of sin, and folly, and madness, though I knew they led to everlasting misery and death. Wretch that I was, to choose those sins and these sorrows, though I knew they were necessarily joined together! I am sent into those regions of misery which I chose for myself, against all the kind admonitions and warnings of God and Christ, of his gospel and his ministers of grace! O these cursed eyes of mine, that led me into the snares of guilt and folly! These cursed hands that practised iniquity with greediness! These cursed lips of mine, which dishonoured my Maker! O these cursed appetites and passions, and this obstinate will, which have wrought my ruin! This cursed body and soul, that have procured their own everlasting wretchedness!" These thoughts will be like a gnawing worm within, which will prey upon the spirit for ever. The fretting smart arising from this vexatious worm must be painful in the highest extreme, when we know it is *a worm which will never die*, which will for ever hang at our heart, and sting our vitals in the most tender and sensible parts of them without intermission as well as without end.

Here on earth the stings and scourges of conscience meet with some intervals of relief, from necessary business which employs the mind, from gay company which diverts the heart, from the refreshments of nature by day, or from the sweet repose of the returning night: But in the world to come every hour shall be filled up with these cutting sorrows, for there is no season of refreshment, no diversion of mind, no sleeping there: All things are for ever awake in that world; there are no shadows and darkness to hide us where this torment shall not find us, for it is bred and lives within. There is no couch there to

lull the conscience into soft repose, and to permit the sufferer to forget his agonies. Ancient crimes shall rise up and stand for ever before the eyes of the sinner in all their glaring forms, and all their heinous aggravating circumstances: These will sit heavy upon the spirit with teazing and eternal vexation. O dreadful state of an immortal creature, which must for ever be its own tormentor, and shall know no relief through all the ages of its immortality! Think of this bitter anguish of soul, O sinner, to guard thee from sin in an hour of strong temptation.

II. Another spring of this torment will be the "overwhelming sense of an angry God, and utter despair of his love which is lost for ever." It was the thought of the displeasure of God, which pierced the soul of David with such acute pain, when he remembered his sins; Psalm li. 3, 4. *My sin is ever before me: Against thee, against thee only have I sinned, and I have done this evil in thy sight:* And again he pleads with God; Psalm vi. 1. *O Lord, chasten me not in thy anger, nor vex me in thy sore displeasure.* He could face a host of armed men without fear, but he could not face an angry God, whose loving-kindness is life, and the loss of whose love is worse than death; Psalm lxxvii. 3. *I remembered God,* said he, *and was troubled,* that is, lest he should *be favourable no more,* and *shut up his tender mercies* in everlasting anger. This was the terror of that good man, under a deep sense of his crimes, and of God hiding his face from him, and this even while he was *in the land of the living,* and was not cast out beyond all hope. But when the grave shuts its mouth on the sinner, and he is thrust out into utter darkness, where the light of God's countenance never shines, nor will shine, how unsupportable must such anguish be? Here in this life perhaps a profane wretch has imagined he could live well enough without God in the world, and was content to have nothing to do with him in a way of worship or dependence here: He determined with himself that the less he could think of God the better, and so forgot his Maker days without number: But in those regions of hell, whither the sinner shall be driven, he can never forget an angry God, nor fly out of the reach of his terrors.

"I am now convinced, saith he, but too late, that happiness dwells in his presence, and *rivers of pleasure flow at his right hand;* but this happiness I shall never see, these streams of pleasure I shall never taste; he is gone for ever with all his love and with all his blessings, God is gone with all his graces and pardons beyond my reach: He stands afar off from my groanings. He told me of it heretofore in the ministry of his word; but, wretch that I was! I would not hearken, I would not believe: I was invited by the Son of his love to receive his gospel, and to partake of forgiving mercy; he stretched out his hands with divine compassion, and offered to receive my soul to his grace, and to wash away my defilements with his own blood; he beseeched me to repent and return to God, and assured me he would secure his Father's favour to me, and a place among the mansions of his glory: But cursed rebel that I was to despise this salvation, and resist the offers of such love, and to renounce such divine compassion! These offers of mercy are for ever finished, I shall never see him more as surrounded with the blessings of his grace, but as the minister of his Father's justice, and the avenger of his abused mercy. There is no other Saviour, no other intercessor to procure divine favour for me, and my hopes are overwhelmed and buried in the eternal despair of his love."

III. There will be found also among the damned "a constant enmity, and malice, and hatred against the blessed God, which can never satisfy nor ease itself by revenge." It seems very strange indeed that a creature should design revenge against his Maker;

but thus it is in these dismal regions of hell: Every wicked man is by nature at enmity with God, and in a state of rebellion; and when this enmity is wrought up to malice, under a sense of his punishing hand, then arises that cursed and detestable desire in the soul of revenging itself against its Maker. The fallen angels, those wicked spirits, have found this dismal temper of mind reigning in them: They hate the blessed God with intense malice, because his governing justice sees fit to punish their pride and other iniquities, and they would fain be revenged of him by destroying mankind who were made after his image: Their malice cannot reach him in the heights of his glory, but they can reach man his creature made in his likeness, and they began to take their revenge there near six thousand years ago. All the sins, and all the miseries of the sons and daughters of Adam, from the beginning of the world to this day, are owing to this madness of malice, this hatred of God in the hearts of evil angels, who were cast out from heaven and the regions of happiness: They began to exert this malice early, and still they are everlasting tempters of men, in order to avenge themselves upon a righteous God.

But alas! what a wretched satisfaction must the damned spirits of men propose to themselves in such a wild and extravagant attempt? The very name and mention of this iniquity seems to put our souls and our ears to pain, while we dwell in flesh and blood; but as cursed and hateful a temper as this is, it is the very spirit and temper of apostate angels; and this will be thy temper and thy spirit, O wilful and impenitent sinner, when thou shalt have obstinately sinned thyself into damnation, and canst never deliver thyself from the punishing hand of God.

"Think, O my soul, at what a dreadful distance such creatures must be from every glimpse of peace and happiness, whose hearts are filled with such blasphemy and rage, and who would be attempting such vain and impious efforts of mingled insolence and madness. Read, O ye foolish and wilful transgressors, read the temper and conduct of devils in their spite and opposition to every thing of God, through all the books of the Old Testament and the New, and remember and think that such will your temper be, when you also shall be banished from the presence of God for your wilful rebellions, as the fallen angels are, and be for ever shut out from all the blessings of his love and all hope of his favour."

IV. A further spring of continued torment is "such fixed and eternal hardness of heart as will never be softened, such impenitence and obstinacy of soul which will never relent or submit." The hardest sinner here on earth may now and then feel a relenting moment, and the most daring atheist may sometimes have a softening thought come across him, which may perhaps bring a tear into his eyes, and may form a good wish or two in his soul, and wring a groan from his heart which looks like repentance; but when we are dismissed from this body, and this state of trial and of hope, eternal hardness seizes upon the mind: *The neck is like an iron sinew* hardened more, if I may so express it, in the fire of hell. The will is fixed in everlasting obstinacy against God, and against the glories of his holiness. If Moses and the prophets, if Christ and his apostles, in the ministry of the word, could not soften the heart of bold transgressors, what can be expected when all the means of grace and the methods of divine compassion are vanished and gone for ever?

It is granted indeed there will be bitter repentance among the damned in hell, and inward vexation of soul and self-cursing in abundance, for having plunged themselves into this misery, and having abandoned all the offers of divine mercy: But it will be only

such a repentance as Judas the traitor felt, when *he repented and hanged himself;* Matt. xxvii. 5. This is a sort of madness of rage within them for having made themselves miserable. But there will be found no hatred of the evil of sin, as it is an offence against God, no painful and relenting sense of their iniquity, as it has dishonoured God and broken his law, no such sorrow for sin as is attended with a hearty aversion to it, and a desire to love God and obey him; but rather they will feel and nourish a growing aversion to God and his holiness.

"Ask yourselves, my young friends, Did you never feel your hearts indulging an angry and unrelenting mood, and stubborn in your wrath against a superior who had sharply reproved you? Or have you never felt an obstinate and unreconcileable hour in your younger years, even against a parent who had severely corrected you? Or have you not found at some seasons, your soul rising and kindling into violent resentment and a revengeful temper against your neighbour upon some supposed affront, damage, or mischief he had done you? Call these unhappy minutes to mind, and learn what hell is: Think into what a wretched case you would be plunged, if this wrath and stubbornness, this enmity and hardness should become immortal and unchangeable, though it were but against a neighbour: But if this obstinacy and stubborn hardiness of soul were bent against God himself, so that you would never relent, never sincerely repent of your crimes, nor bow, nor yield either to his majesty or his mercy, what would you think of yourselves and of your state? Would you not be wretched and horrible creatures indeed, without the least reason to hope for favour and compassion at his hands? Such is the case probably of every damned sinner. Amazing scene of complicated misery and rebellion! A guilty spirit which cannot repent! A rebellious spirit which cannot submit even to God himself! A hardened soul that cannot bend nor yield to its Maker! Must not such a wretch be for ever the object of its own inward torment, as well as of divine punishment? O the hopeless and dreadful state of every bold transgressor, that is gone to death without true repentance for having offended God, and ingenuous relentings of heart for sin are never found in those regions of future misery! No kindly meltings of soul toward God are ever known there."

V. There will be also "intense sorrow and wild impatience at the loss of present comforts, without any recompence and without any relief." If this world, O sinful creature, with the riches, or the honours, or the pleasures of it be all thy chosen happiness, what universal grief and vexation will overspread all the powers of thy nature, when thou shalt be torn away from them all, even from all thy happinesses by death, and have nothing come in the room of them, nothing to relieve thy piercing grief, nothing to divert or amuse this vexation, nothing to soothe or ease this eternal pain at the heart?

And yet further, when thou shalt be as the prophet speaks, *Like a wild bull in a net,* struggling and tossing to and fro to free thyself on all sides, when thou shalt be racked with inward fretfulness and impatience, and *full of the fury of the Lord* that made thee, *and the rebuke of that God* that punishes thee; *Isaiah* li. 20. Then shall thy heart, hard as it is in an obstinate course of sin, be ready to burst and break, not with penitence, but madness and over-swelling sorrows: And yet it must not break nor dissolve, but will remain firm and hard for ever to suffer these pangs. This is and must be an eternal heart-ach, for there are no broken hearts in hell in any sense whatsoever. There the eyes are weeping, and the hands are wringing, and the tongue almost dried with long wailings and outcries, and the teeth gnashing with madness of thought: This is

our Saviour's frequent representation of hell, "There shall be weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth;" *Matt.* xxii. 13. and yet the heart ever living and ever obstinate, to supply fresh springs of these sorrows, and to feel the anguish of them all.

VI. There will be also "raging desires of ease and pleasure which shall never be satisfied, together with perpetual disappointment and endless confusion thrown upon all their schemes and their efforts of hope." It is the nature of man, while it continues in being, that it must desire happiness, and make some efforts towards it: And some divines have supposed, that men of wicked sensuality and luxury in this world, have so drenched their souls in fleshly appetite by indulging lusts, and placing their chief satisfaction and happiness therein, that they will carry this very temper of sensuality with them into the world of spirits; and it is possible their raging appetites to this sensual happiness, may be increased while there are no objects to gratify them; if this be the case, it must be intense and constant misery to feel eternal hunger with no bread to relieve it; keen desire of dainties with no luxurious dishes to please their humorous taste; eternal thirst without one drop of wine or water to allay or cool it; eternal fatigue and weariness without power to sleep, and eternal lust of pleasure without any hope of gratification.

But if we should suppose these sensualities shall die together with the body, yet this is certain, the soul will have everlasting appetites of its own, that is, the general desire of ease and happiness, and of some satisfying good: But God, who is the only true source of happiness to spirits, the only satisfying portion of souls, is for ever departed and gone; and thus the natural appetite of felicity will be ever wakeful and violent in damned spirits, while every attempt or hope to satisfy it will meet with perpetual disappointment.

Milton, our great English poet, has represented this part of the misery of devils in a beautiful manner. He supposes that ever since they tempted man to sin by the forbidden tree of knowledge, they are once a year changed into the form of serpents, and brought by millions into a grove of such trees, with the same golden appearance of fruit upon them: And while with eager appetite they seize those fair appearances to allay their thirst and hunger, instead of fruit they chew nothing but bitter ashes, and reject the hateful taste with spattering noise; and still they repeat their attempts with shameful disappointment, till they are vexed, and tormented, and torn with meagre famine, and then are permitted to resume the shape of devils again. And why may we not suppose that the crimes of which the wicked children of men have been guilty in the present life, may be punished with some such kind of pain and confusion, both of body and soul, as is here represented in this poetic emblem or parable?

VII. Another misery of damned creatures is, that "vexing envy which arises against the saints in glory, and which shall never be appeased or gratified. The blessed in heaven shall be for ever blessed, and the envy of devils and of damned souls shall never hurt their felicity, nor see their joys diminished. This vile passion of those cursed spirits therefore against the blessed inhabitants of heaven, though it rage never so high, is only preying upon their own hearts and increasing their own inward anguish.

Let us imagine how many thousand holy souls are arrived safe at paradise, who were surrounded with mean and low circumstances here upon earth, while their haughty lords, and their rich insolent neighbours, have sinned themselves into hell: And do you think those children of pride can ever bear this sight without envy? How many martyrs have ascended to glory from racks, and tortures, and fires, here upon earth, while their bloody

and cruel persecutors have been working out their own damnation by these inhuman acts of murder and cruelty? And will not these wretches, under their righteous sufferings and punishments in hell, envy the creatures whom they have scorned and oppressed, and murdered here on earth, when they shall see them placed on high seats in the kingdom of heaven, and themselves cast into utter darkness?

And what does all this envy do but increase their own wretchedness? They are distracted with pride and rage to think of these high favours of the blessed God bestowed on creatures whom they treated once with the utmost disdain: But their envy, like a viper, preys upon their own entrails, and shall never be allayed or made easy: They send a thousand curses up to the heavenly world; but the saints are for ever secured in happiness under the eye of God their heavenly Father, and the care of Jesus, their almighty friend.

"O what a painful plague must this envy be, when with all her envenomed whips and stings she does but scourge and torment the heart where she dwells? What an unspeakable torture must it be to feel this envy so violent and so constant, that it gives itself no ease through everlasting ages? Who is there that dwells in flesh and blood can conceive or express the horror and the twinging agonies that arise from such a hateful passion, fermenting and raging through all the powers of the soul?"

VIII. The last thing I shall mention, as part of those punishments of hell which affect the spirit, is a "perpetual expectation and dread of new and increasing punishments without end;" and it is highly probable, that this shall be the portion of multitudes. When the souls of the saints are released by death, and arrive at the blessed regions, they are not vested with all their brightest glories in a moment, nor fixed in the highest point of knowledge and happiness at their first entrance; but as their knowledge and their love increases, so their capacities are enlarged to take in new scenes and new degrees of pleasures, and it is probable that their felicity shall be ever increasing. And in the same manner, it is not unlikely that the increasing sins, the growing wickedness, and mad rebellion of damned spirits, may bring upon them new judgments and more weighty vengeance. So it was with Pharaoh the Egyptian tyrant, when he remained obstinate and rebellious against the messages of God by Moses, even while he and his nation lay under smarting scourges of the Almighty: How did his plagues increase with his iniquities? And he may be set before us as an emblem of sinners, and their sufferings under the wrath of God in hell, as in *Rom.* ix. 17, 18.

Or perhaps as the wicked of this world when they die, have left evil and pernicious examples behind them, or have corrupted the morals of their neighbours by their enticements, or their commands, or by their wicked influence of any kind, so their punishment may be increased in proportion to the lasting effects of their vile example or their vicious influences. And perhaps too, there are none among all the ranks of the damned, whose souls will be filled so high with the dread and horror of increasing woes, as lewd and profane writers, profane and immoral princes, or cruel persecutors of religion. Jeroboam the king not only sinned himself grievously, but who made Israel to sin, as the scripture frequently expresses it with an emphasis, by setting up the idolatry of calves in the land; 1 *Kings* xiv. and xv. and xvi. His ghost stood fair for such an increase of torment from age to age, as his idolatry prevailed further in the land. And all the wanton poets and the vile persecutors, whether of heathen or of christian name, whose writings, whose

example, or whose laws have conveyed and propagated their wickedness from age to age after their decease, will be some of these wretched expectants of new and increasing punishment.

"Have a care, O ye witty and ye mighty sinners! Have a care of setting vile temptations and bad examples before the men of your age! Have a care of spreading the contagion of your vices around you by the softness and the force of your allurements! Have a care of *establishing iniquity by a law*, and propagating loose and wicked opinions, or of encouraging persecution for conscience sake! Take heed lest the cursed influence of your crimes should descend from generation to generation, among the living long after you are dead, and should call for new and sharper strokes from the punishing hand of the Almighty!"

But suppose there were nothing else but the long dreadful view of the eternity of their present miseries, with an everlasting despair of ease or deliverance, this would add unspeakably to their torment: The constant sensation of what they feel now, and the dread of what they must feel, is sufficient to make their wretchedness intolerable.

If all these springs of misery which I have already mentioned, are and will be found in the souls of damned sinners, there is no need of more to make them exquisitely miserable: And yet since their bodies shall be raised from the dust in order to be joined with their souls in punishment, as they were united in sin, why may we not suppose that the great God will create bodies for them of such an unhappy mould and contexture, as shall be another perpetual source of pain and anguish? What if their bodies shall be raised with all the seeds of disease in them, like the gout or the stone, or any other smarting malady? And what if the smart of these bodily distempers should mingle with the raging passions of the mind, as far as it is consistent with immortality and everlasting duration? Who can say, that when God "exerts his power, and makes his wrath known," in punishing obstinate, rebellious and impenitent sinners, as *Rom.* ix. 22. he will not frame such bodies for them to dwell in, as shall be a hateful burden, and an incessant plague to them through all ages of their duration? And perhaps these bodily pains may be also included in the metaphor of a gnawing worm bred within them which will never die, which shall never cease to fill them with grievous anguish.

Here perhaps it may be enquired, "are there not multitudes of men in this world, who are not sinners of grosser kind, but have lived, in the main, in the practice of common social duties, and have maintained the usual forms of religion, according to the outward rules of the gospel and the custom of their nation, but they have been negligent indeed of any sincere repentance towards God, and have been strangers to inward vital religion throughout their whole course? Shall these creatures, who seem to stand in a sort of indifferent character, who are outwardly blameless, with regard to common morality, and have exercised the common virtues of justice and benevolence towards their fellow-creatures, perhaps under the influences of education or custom, or perhaps by the effect that reason or philosophy, or their inward fears have had toward the restraint of their passions and appetites; I say, shall such sort of creatures as these be filled with those furies of rage and resentment against God, envy and malice toward their fellow-sinners, and all the vile and unsociable passions in these regions of misery which they have never found working in them here on earth, or but in a low degree? Shall all the torments and inward anguish of soul that you have been describing, fall upon this rank of sinners,

whom the eye of the world could hardly distinguish from good men, and who were very far from the character of wicked? I answer,

I. That however there may seem to be three sorts of persons, in our esteem, *viz.* the good, the bad, and the indifferent, yet the word of God seems to acknowledge but two sorts, *viz.* "Those who fear God and serve him, and those who fear him not;" *Mal.* iii. 18. Those who have acted from principles of inward religion or the love of God, and those who had no such principle within them: And therefore the scripture reveals and declares but two sorts of states in the future world, *viz.* that of rewards and punishments, or that of happiness and misery: And as God, the righteous Judge, is intimately acquainted with all the secret principles and workings of every heart, he alone knows who have practised virtue sincerely from pious principles, and who have had no such principles within them. He well distinguishes who they are that have complied with the rules of the dispensation under which they have lived, or who have not complied with it: And such as may have *the good esteem of men* may be highly *offensive to God*, who knows all things, and may be worthy of his final punishment; *the judge of the whole earth will do right;** Gen. xviii. 25.

And since he has declared it to be his rule of judgment, that *he will reward every one according to their works;* Matt. xvi. 27. and *it shall be much more tolerable for* some of those creatures than it shall be for others, by reason of their lesser crimes, or their nearer approaches to virtue and piety: so it is certain he will act in perfect justice and equity towards every criminal, and none shall be punished above their demerits, though no impenitent sinner shall go unpunished. We do not therefore imagine, that every condemned criminal shall have the same degree of inward raging passions, the same madness and fury against God and their fellow-creatures, nor the same anguish of conscience as those who have been more grossly and obstinately wicked and vicious, and have wilfully refused and renounced the well-known offers of grace and salvation: There are innumerable degrees of inward punishment and pain, according to the degrees of sin.

II. It should be added too, that that world of punishment is also a world of increasing wickedness, and those that have had some natural virtues and some appearances of goodness here, may and will renounce it all in the world to come, where they find themselves punished for their impenitence and irreligion, and their criminal neglect of God and godliness: And the least and lightest of the punishments of damned souls will be terrible enough, and yet not surpass the desert of their offences. They have been all in greater or less degrees treasuring up food for this fire, which is unquenchable.

Besides, it may be added here, that in threatenings the holy scripture generally expresses them in their highest degrees and most formidable appearances, on purpose to secure men from coming near the peril and border of them. This shall suffice to explain the first part of the metaphor in my text, that is, *The worm that dieth not.*

* It has been the opinion of some writers in elder and in later times, that the vast numbers of indifferent persons, who have neither been evidently holy or evidently wicked, shall be sent to a new state of trial in the other world; but I can find nothing of this doctrine in the Bible, nor any hint of it, unless in that obscure text of St. Peter, 1 *Pet.* iii. 19. where Christ is said "to go and preach to the spirits" of those sinners who were drowned in the flood of Noah, which may be construed to another sense with truth and justice.

SECTION II.

THE FIRE WHICH SHALL NOT BE QUENCHED.

I PROCEED now to consider, The second part of the description of hell in the nature of it, as it is represented by our Saviour, and that is, that *the fire is never quenched.*

Fire signifies the medium or instrument of torture from without, which God has threatened to employ in the punishment of guilty creatures, even as the *gnawing worm* signifies their inward torment. Fire applied to the sensible and tender parts of the flesh, gives the sharpest pain of any thing that comes within our common notice, and it is used in scripture to signify the punishments of damned sinners, and the wrath of God in the world to come: And perhaps that text is the foundation of it, Isaiah xxx. 33. *Tophet is ordained of old, he has made it deep and large, the pile thereof is fire and much wood, and the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.* This Tophet was a place in the valley of Hinnom, where children were wont to be burned in sacrifice to the idol Moloch; and from these Hebrew words, hell in the New Testament is called Geenna, because of the burning torture and terrible shrieks of dying children in this valley of Hinnom.

This description of hell by fire is used by our Saviour and his apostles, in their speeches and writings on this subject. Hell-fire is mentioned six times in six verses where my text lies; the last sentence of judgment passed upon sinners, as it is represented by our Saviour, is expressed in the same language, Matt. xxv. 41. *Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire.* The apostle Paul, speaking of the return of Christ, 2 *Thess.* i. 8. asserts, that *he shall appear in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel:* And in *Rev.* xiv. 10, 11. as well as in other parts of this book, the final punishment of sinners is represented by *fire and brimstone,* as the instruments of their torment.

It is true indeed, spirits or beings which have no body cannot feel burning by material fire, unless they are united to some sort of material vehicles; but that God will use material fire to punish obstinate and rebellious sinners hereafter at the resurrection, is not improbable, though it is very hard to say with full assurance: Since the bodies of the wicked are to be raised again, it is not at all unlikely that their habitation shall be a place of fire, and their bodies may be made immortal to endure the smart and torture without consuming. Did not this God, by his almighty power and mercy, preserve the bodies of Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego, in the burning furnace of Nebuchadnezzar, so that the fire had no power to consume or destroy them? *Dan.* iii. 21—27. And cannot his power do the same thing under the influence of his justice as well as of his mercy? May they not be maintained for ever in their existence to endure the appointed and deserved vengeance? If the blessed God has with *much long-suffering borne with these vessels of wrath,* under their repeated oppositions to his law and gospel, and they still go on in their vice, obstinacy, and impenitence, and have fitted themselves for destruction, surely he will make *his wrath and power known* in their punishment, as St. Paul expresses it, *Romans* ix. 22. and when the power and wrath of a God unite to punish a creature, how miserable must that creature be?

It is certain that God has been pleased in his word frequently to make use of fire, brim-

stone, burning, smoke, darkness and chains, and every thing that is painful and noisome to nature on earth, in order to represent the miseries that he has prepared for sinners in hell: And we must suppose that all these metaphors, if they are but mere metaphors, carry with them a sense of most intense pain and anguish with which God will afflict the bodies, as well as the spirits of those guilty creatures, who have rebelled against his majesty, rejected his mercy, and exposed themselves to his indignation. But what particular instruments and methods of punishment, what other elements or means of torture the great God will make use of to execute his sentence in this tremendous work, is more than we can now declare, because God has not fully declared it: And I pray God none of us may be ever doomed to learn it by terrible experience. But if there be nothing but fire, the anguish will be intolerable, as one of our poets expresses it,

> "In liquid burnings, or on dry to dwell,
> Is all the sad variety of hell."

Or what if the Almighty, who has all nature, with all its powers at his command, should employ other material instruments for the execution of his deserved wrath? What if he should choose the alternate extremes of fire and frost, as some have imagined, to torment those impenitent criminals? Or what if the creatures which they have abused to their impious and brutish purposes, should be made instruments and mediums of their punishment? Wine may be rendered a frequent means of sickness, agony, and pain to the drunkard, and meat and other dainties to the glutton, and gold to the covetous wretches who made gold their god, that they may all remember their crimes in their sufferings. The wisdom of God will execute the sentence of his justice in the most honourable manner.

And after all, if we call away our thoughts from fire, and every material instrument of pain which the great God may employ in punishing obstinate rebels, and survey only those acute and dreadful impressions of horror and anguish which a just and holy God may make on sinful spirits in an immediate manner in hell, this would overwhelm our souls with insupportable agonies: *Who knows the power of thy anger? For according to thy fear so is thy wrath,* says Moses, *Psalm* xc. 11. Our fears do not rise above those evils which the wrath of God will inflict. Who knows what are those arrows of the Almighty of which Job speaks, *the poison whereof drank up his spirits,* and those *terrors of God which set themselves in array against him?* Job vi. 4. Who knows what our Saviour felt in the hour of his agony and atonement for our sins, which made him sweat drops of blood? And what sort of terrible impressions God himself may make of his own wrath and vengeance, on the heart of such criminals as wilfully reject his salvation, is beyond our thoughts to conceive, or our language to express.

Thus much shall suffice concerning the metaphor of fire, and the hand of God himself in kindling this fire for the execution of his sentence against impenitents. But since I have entered so far into this subject, I cannot think it proper entirely to finish it, without giving notice of some different and dreadful additions to their torment, which will arise from evil angels, and from their companions in sin and misery among the children of men: For in the agonies of our Saviour, men and devils joined together to afflict him, when *it pleased the Father to bruise him, and to make his soul an offering for our sins;* Isaiah liii. 9.

I. "Evil angels, wicked and unclean spirits, with all their furious dispositions and

active powers, will increase the misery of the damned." They paved the way to hell for man by the first temptation of our parents in paradise, and they have been ever since busy in tempting the children of men to sin, and they will be hereafter as busy in giving them torment. When these wicked spirits, O sinner, who have taken thee as a willing captive by their baits and devices in this world, when they have led thee down through the paths of vice to the regions of sorrow, they will begin then to insult thee with hateful reproaches, and to triumph over thee with insolence and scorn. When they have deceived thee on earth to thy own perdition, they will make thee the object of their bitter ridicule and mockery in hell.

O could we turn aside the veil of the invisible world, and behold *the bottomless pit* open before you, what bitter groans of ghosts would you hear, not only oppressed and agonizing under the wrath of a righteous God, but also under the insults of cruel devils? As *there is joy among the angels of heaven when a sinner repents;* Luke xv. 10. or when a soul arrives safely at those blessed mansions, so when a rebellious and obstinate criminal is sent down to hell, you would hear the triumphs of those malicious spirits over him, with the voice of insulting pride and hellish joy: And while they domineer over you, and tear you as *roaring lions*, who seek and tear their prey, you will curse yourselves a thousand times for hearkening to their deceitful allurements. You will vent your rage against yourselves at the same time that they scoff at you as eternal fools, who have lost a God, and a heaven, and immortal happiness, by your own madness and folly in hearkening to their temptations.

II. "The mutual upbraidings of fellow-sinners and fellow-sufferers among the children of men, will aggravate your wretchedness day and night without end." Those who drew each other into foul iniquities, shall fill the ears of each other with loud and sharp reproaches for their mutual influence on both their ruin, and shall charge their damnation, and all their heavy sorrows, as a heavy load on each other's souls. Some of those who have been joined in the nearest ties of kindred and friendship, while they dwelt in flesh and blood, shall be the terrible instruments of their keenest remorse and vexation, and teaze their spirits with endless upbraidings. Here the sons of pride, that most hateful iniquity, shall be overwhelmed with huge mortification and disdain: The mighty sinner shall be insulted by the meanest of the crowd, and princes shall be bearded and affronted by those gay slaves of the court, whom they once employed in flattering and adoring them. They were once vain enough to believe they were something more than mortal; but now they are spurned by those very flatterers with a foot of contempt, and their eternal pride still swelling, gives their own hearts new stings and twinges at every resentment. None but a proud and haughty creature here in this world, who has sometimes met with scorn and insult from his inferiors, can speak feelingly of the exquisite sensibility of these torments of soul in hell.

But besides this, there are many sinners who lived in malice, and who died with their hearts full of revenge against their fellow-sinners; and when they shall meet them in those deplorable regions, how natural is it to suppose they will endeavour to execute this revenge upon them, without end and without mercy? For it may be easily supposed, that malice, revenge and cruelty, which are the proper character of devils, shall not be abated among the children of men, when they are grown so near akin in their tempers to those evil spirits, and are now for ever mingled amongst them. And yet farther, who knows what the damned in hell shall endure from the endless brawls and bitter quarrels among

themselves? What new contentions will arise perpetually in such a country, where it is perhaps the practice and custom of the place, and the nature of the inhabitants, for the most part, to make every one of their fellows as uneasy and as miserable as they can? Oh! what mad and furious pride and malice, and every hellish passion, will be raging almost in every bosom against all those who are near them, and this in a dark prison where all are intensely tormented, and where there is no such thing as compassion or sincere love, nothing to sooth each other's sorrows, but every thing that may add to the smart and anguish!

" O that the present survey of these horrors of soul, these complicated distresses and miseries from within us and without us, from every quarter of heaven and hell, from the *gnawing worm* within us, and from the fire of *the wrath of God*, and the mutual insults, railings, and injuries of men and devils, might all lie with its due weight upon our spirits now, while we are in the land of hope; that every one of us may be awakened to a timely concern about our highest interest, and hasten to make our escape as Lot did from Sodom, lest the sentence of death be pronounced upon us while we delay, and the fiery deluge overtake us." But here I would tarry a little to answer a repeated objection, *viz.* The terror of this outward punishment from the hand of God, which is described by avenging fire, is so severe and intolerable, that it awakens some lesser criminals to raise the same cavil against this *unquenchable fire*, or God's punishing hand, as was raised before against the *never-dying worm*, or the inward anguish of soul arising from its own conscience.

It is possible some lesser sinner, who has had more appearances of piety or religion here on earth, may rise and say, " you have set the punishments of sin in a most horrible and tremendous light, from this metaphor of fire, as well as from the deathless worm: But surely this cannot be the case, nor these the sufferings which God will inflict on every wretched creature in hell. Are not the punishments there proportioned to the offences? What if these sharpest and deepest tortures and horrors should be the portion of the vilest criminals, the most impious rebels against God, the profane and obstinate abusers of grace, the scoffers of Christ and his gospel, and the cruel persecutors of all the saints, yet will every soul who had not quite religion and holiness enough to reach heaven, be thus terribly tormented in hell? Does not Christ himself tell us, and did you not allow before, *that it shall be more tolerable for* some sinners than for others? And will there be no easier abodes, no milder regions, no kinder and more favourable appointments for such as have had many good wishes and hopes, many friendly exercises of virtue towards men, and some workings of imperfect piety towards God?" To this I answer, as before,

It is certain that every one shall be judged according to their works, by an unerring rule of equity, and shall be punished according to the aggravation of their iniquities. But dost thou know, O sinner, how great is that punishment which the least transgression against the law of God deserves? One single sin, which thou wilt not part with, will create insufferable misery. And though there may be other criminals there of much more heinous and aggravated guilt, profaneness, and rebellion than thine is, yet if thy soul be filled with all that torment which one sin may create and deserve, there will be hell enough around thee to make thy distress too terrible for thee to bear. Besides, let it be remembered, that whatsoever tendencies toward piety, or appearances of goodness, might be found with thee in this world, all these will vanish and be lost, when once thy day of grace is finished, and all the means of grace and salvation are ended for ever. If

thou hast refused the proposals of mercy, and continued in thy sins without repentance, and hast never accepted the salvation of Christ while it was offered, all the good *that thou seemed to have shall be taken from thee;* Matt. xxv. 29. or rather thy heart itself will grow more hard, thy will more obstinate against God, and every evil passion will rise and prevail, and make thee perhaps as very a devil as thy companions in guilt and misery. It is for those who would not part with their beloved sins, which were as dear as *right hands*, or as *right eyes*, that the *never-dying worm* and the *unquenchable fire* are prepared, as the context itself informs us in this place.

And as the worm of conscience, even for lesser sins, will gnaw thy heart with intense anguish, so the vengeance of divine fire will torment thee with exquisite pain, though thy pain and thy anguish shall not be equal to what greater criminals endure. But it is wise and kind in the blessed God to denounce the terrors and sanctions of his law in their utmost severity, to guard his law the better against every transgression, and to frighten and secure his creatures from sin and punishment.

"Trifle not therefore, O sinner, with the means of mercy, and venture not upon little sins, in hope of little misery, nor dare to continue in an impenitent state without God, without Christ and his salvation, upon a foolish presumption that thy sins are but small, and thy punishment shall be less than others: For the least of those sorrows will be found greater than any mortal creature can bear, and therefore thou shalt be made immortal to suffer them."

It is granted, there *are many mansions* in hell, as well as in heaven, but as the lowest mansion in heaven is happiness, so the easiest place in hell is misery. There is another objection arises here, which it is necessary to give some answer to, *viz.* If the punishments of hell are so intense and terrible, between the worm of conscience, the fire of God's anger, and the malice of evil spirits, surely it will work up human nature into ectasy and madness; it will take away all the regular exercise of our natural powers; it will render us perhaps mere passive miserable beings, of keen sensations without reasoning. This is certain, that such and so various tortures would have that influence upon our natures at present, and why should it not hereafter? And will the blessed God continue to punish creatures when their reason is lost! What can such punishments avail?

I answer, surely God will not continue to punish madmen; therefore none of these torments shall extinguish our reason, or destroy our intellectual powers; for it is as creatures of reason and free-will that sinners are thus punished, and therefore these powers must remain in their proper exercise; besides the very operations of these powers in self-condemnation and self-upbraiding, are part of their punishment. But whether God will so fortify the natures of the damned, which probably shall not be made of flesh and blood, and enable them to bear such intense pain without distraction, or whether the highest extremes of their torment shall only be inflicted at some certain periods or intervals, so that they shall soon return to their reasoning powers again, with bitter remembrance of what passed, this matter is hard to determine; and because it is unwritten and unrevealed, I am silent. But it still remains that punishment shall be so intense and severe, as becomes a God of holiness and justice to inflict on rebellious and obstinate creatures.

SECTION III.

REFLECTIONS ON THE NATURE OF THESE PUNISHMENTS.

It is time now that we should proceed to form some special reflections on the nature of the punishments of hell, such as they have been described in the foregoing discourse. The first is this:

Reflection I. "What dreadful and unknown evil is contained in the nature of sin, which grows up into such misery, which breeds this stinging worm in the conscience, which prepares the creature for such fiery torments, and which provokes a God to inflict them? *The vessels of wrath* have prepared themselves for it, as the apostle intimates, by their own sins, Romans ix. 22. *they are fitted for destruction:* Nor does all the intense and infinite anguish of this punishment exceed the desert of our sins. The great God, in a way of bounty, may often bestow upon us vastly beyond what our little services can ever pretend to have deserved, but he never punishes beyond our deserts.

"What a dangerous and pernicious mistake is it in the children of men to sport with sin, as with a harmless thing? It is much safer sporting with a poisonous serpent, or with burning firebrands. The serpent has many gay and pleasing colours on its skin, and appears a very charming creature, which tempts children and fools to play with it: And the same ignorance inclines them sometimes to sport with fire, because of its shining brightness: And till they are burned with the fire, or bit by the serpent, they will not forsake their foolish choice, nor be convinced of their danger: Such is the case and temper of sinful mortals: Their senses indulge the pleasing flatteries of sin, and are fond of its tempting amusements, till they feel the smart of the fire raging in their bosoms, and the adder stings them to death. Thus the wise man describes the flatteries of wine in the view of the drunkard, *Prov.* xxiii. 31, 32. But the same wise man pronounces every one a *fool that makes a mock at sin*, or trifles with so formidable a mischief, *Prov.* xiv. 9.

"How vain are the gay fancies of sinful men in the hour of temptation, and how shocking and dreadful will be their disappointment? They think the descriptions of sin, which are blown up and kindled into such terror by the lips of the preacher, are but as mock fire, which never burns; but the great day of vengeance, which makes haste towards them, will terribly and eternally convince them of the fatal mischief of it by the various plagues that shall seize upon them. The living worm shall gnaw their consciences, and *the fire of God* will torment their spirits, and spread a raging anguish through their whole natures; and every twinging accent of their pain shall teach them, but with a terrible and hopeless conviction, what unspeakable evil is contained in sin. They will then find what *a fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God*, who has a right, and power, and will to punish, *Heb.* x. 31.

"O that each of us might arrive at this holy wisdom, to learn the dreadful evil of sin from this Bible, this book of the divine law and grace, and not provoke the blessed God to teach us so necessary a lesson by the rod of his vengeance. O that we could look upon every unlawful action, and particularly every sin against conscience, as the seed of that worm which will gnaw our souls in hell with intense pain, as part of that fuel which is kindling into a flame to torment our consciences for ever, and that under the powerful influences of these representations of sin, we might fly to the utmost distance from it with horror, and make our safe escape."

II. If the punishments of hell, appointed by the blessed God, carry so much terror in them, "how much mistaken are the sinful children of men in the ideas which they form of the great and blessed God?" This representation of the vengeance of the Lord in hell, may be of use to refute such mistaken opinions. Some have framed a God for themselves; not such as dwells in the heavens, not such as he has described himself in his word, but their vain imagination has raised up an idol made of mere goodness and mercy, without holiness and justice: It is their own self-love which forms this idle and foolish image of the God that made them, because they do not like to think of falling under the terror of his power. They venture to affront him to his face, they dare him to vengeance; and, as the writer of the book of Job expresses it, *they stretch out their hands against God, they strengthen themselves against the Almighty, they run upon* him with insolence, and venture upon *the thick bosses of his buckler;* Job xv. 25, 26. There are multitudes in our day that are arrived at such a dreadful height of impiety, as to call upon him for the damnation of themselves, as well as of their friends, in sport and merriment. They will not believe that the blessed God will ever be found so severe and formidable as preachers describe him: And *because judgment is not speedily executed against the men of iniquity, therefore the sons of men have their hearts set in them to do mischief;* Eccles. viii. 11. *Madness is in their hearts*, chapter ix. 3. Because God delays his indignation, they will not believe he has any belonging to him, notwithstanding all the terrible words by which he is represented by the prophets, the apostles, and the Son of God himself: And while they rush boldly on those crimes which God has severely forbidden, they are ready to think God is just *such a one as themselves*, regardless of virtue and government, *Psalm* l. 21. And because they make nothing of sin, they imagine God will make nothing of it.

O that the sons of men would once learn to know God better, for there are many *who have not the true knowledge of God, I speak it to their shame*, when they fancy he is all made up of gentleness and forbearance, without holiness and justice, 1 *Cor* xv. 34. Alas, Sirs! these attributes are as necessary in a God as grace and compassion. He is, and he must be a wise, a righteous Governor of the world; and his wisdom requires that impenitent sinners should be punished, to secure the honour of his law, and to guard his gospel from contempt.* These awful perfections of the blessed God are as necessary to vindicate his authority and his government from insult and rebellion, as his goodness is needful to encourage sinful creatures to repent, and return to their duty. The word of God expressly tells us, he is *a God of holiness and consuming fire;* Heb. xii. 29. but there is many a sinner that will never learn this lesson till the torments of hell teach it him by dismal experience. They have trifled with his majesty, and mocked at his threatenings all their life, till at the moment of death he awakes like a lion, and tears their spirits with everlasting anguish.

I might take notice also, in this place, that there is another mistaken notion of God, into which some persons have unhappily fallen, as "though God were the cause and

* A governor made up of mere goodness and mercy could be no governor at all; for it is absurd to call that a government where every subject may do what iniquity and mischief he pleases with impunity. The laws of such a government would cease to be laws, and become mere rules and directions for living, which every one might observe or not, just according to his inclination. To say that it became the wisdom of God to threaten offenders, but that his goodness will interpose in the end and hinder the punishment, is to say, that God is not wise, for if he were he would certainly have taken care not to let those men into the secret.—*Bishop Hort's Sermons*, page 315.

author of sin," and have spoken *unadvisedly with their lips*, in such language as borders too near upon blasphemy. But it is evident, that a God, who will punish the sins of men with such intense pain and torment, can never be so inconsistent with himself as to be the author or cause of those sins. It is granted, that his universal providence has a concern in every thing that is transacted among men; but since he has informed us in what a dreadful manner he will execute his vengeance against sinners in the world to come, it is insolence and indignity against the blessed God, to represent him as introducing sin into our world. *Let God be true, though every man be a liar;* Rom. iii. 4. let God be pure, and righteous, and holy, though every man be found guilty and criminal; otherwise *how shall God judge the world?* verse 6. How can he inflict such torments on rebellious creatures, if he constrain or influence them to practise this rebellion? All opinions, therefore, that allow of such an inference, as though "God were the author of sin," must be pronounced false and pernicious to men, as well as injurious to the justice of God; for these notions throw a vile imputation on the blessed God, and charge him with heinous insincerity, to forbid the commission of sin by all these terrors, and yet suppose him to influence men to the practice of them.

III. "How reasonable is it for us to believe, that such a hell as I have described is prepared for impenitent sinners, since there are so many appearances of the beginnings of it here on earth," so many indications, and signs, and forerunners of such misery and torment inflicted on sinful men. Survey the remarkable executions of God's judgments on the world in several ages and nations; look back to our first parents, who were thrust out of paradise, the garden of pleasure, and banished from the gates of it for ever, upon the account of the first sin, and the entrance of it was guarded by a *flaming sword*, to forbid their return. Behold the flood of watery vengeance in the days of Noah breaking up from the vast caverns of the earth, and pouring down from the windows of heaven to punish sin: *Deep calls unto deep;* Psalm xlii. 7. in the tremendous noise of these waterspouts, which spread death and desolation over the face of the whole earth, because all flesh had sinned against God their Creator. Turn your eyes to Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities of the plain, *suffering the vengeance of heaven* with lightning and devouring fire bursting from the clouds to punish the unnatural crimes of that country, *Gen.* xix. 24, 25. See the *fiery flying serpents*, as the messengers of divine anger, to punish the rebellion of the Israelites in the wilderness: Mark what multitudes in the camp of Israel received their mortal sting, and were given up to destruction and death, *Numbers* xxi. 6. Cast your eyes abroad over the nations, and what records have we of all former ages, which do not manifest the vengeance of God pursuing the iniquities of men, by wars, and famines, and pestilences, and every thing that is bitter and dreadful to human nature. See Jerusalem, the city of God, all in flames, and the whole land of Judea laid desolate with deepest distress, diffused and reigning among all the inhabitants of it: Above a million of them were actually slaughtered and consumed by famine and sword, as a sacrifice to the anger of God, for their long provocations, and the cruel barbarous murder of his Son Jesus. And when you have taken all these surveys, then tell me if such *terrors of the Lord* do not give us sufficient warning what unknown agonies and destructions may be expected by obstinate and impenitent sinners from the hand of God, when the utmost limits of his patience restrain his wrath no longer, but his wisdom gives a loose to all his fiery indignation.

To enforce this yet upon your hearts, think again of all the pains and torments of flesh and spirit, which arise from the distempers of body, and from the anguish of soul, even

in this present state of trial, this land of hope, this season of divine long-suffering. Go to the hospitals, where the gout, and stone, and rheumatism, and a thousand maladies torture the nerves and the joints of men with intolerable smart; and infer thence what God will inflict both on the flesh and spirit, or the soul and body of sinners, in the day of his complete vengeance, when his offers of mercy and the years of his grace are come to their last period. Go and survey the fields of battle and slaughter, where thousands of the dead and the dying are mingled in confused heaps, and groan out their souls in long anguish and extreme torture, with bruises and wounds, and all the smarting effects of the instruments of war. Now if all these things come under the conduct of divine providence in a sinful world, which is yet in a way of hope, what may those resolved and obstinate rebels expect, when all the doors of hope are shut up for ever, and providence has nothing to do on earth or in hell, but to execute the vengeance of a God.

Shall we take one step yet farther, and think of the inward pangs of conscience which some awakened criminals have felt in this life on the account of sin, when *the arrows of God* have been shot into their souls, *and the poison thereof* lies *drinking up their spirits!* Think what dreadful ferments of passion and rage, and hatred of God, have been found in the hearts of some sinful creatures, when they have grown mad with revenge against God, and against themselves, and envy against all their fellow-mortals, who are not in the same circumstances; think yet again how terribly their misery must be aggravated, when the torture of everlasting despair attends all the rest of the pains and sorrows they suffer; and then say, if the description of a future hell in the word of God may not be true and real. What anguish beyond all the power of present thought and language may seize all the powers of wilful and impious rebels against the authority and the mercy of God, when all the stores of his vengeance that have been treasuring up for many years shall be poured out upon them without any mitigation or mixture of mercy.

IV. "It is matter of surprise and great astonishment, that thousands and ten thousands of the sinful children of men, from day to day, and from year to year, are walking on the borders of all this misery, and yet are so thoughtless and unconcerned about it." They carry peaceful and easy minds in the midst of this dreadful danger, and while they have all the symptoms of *the children of wrath* upon them, they live without fear, and make no effort toward their escape. Wretched creatures indeed! who have a mortal disease upon them that will breed this gnawing worm of conscience, that will grow up into all this anguish and distress, and yet are senseless of their own peril, unacquainted with their own state of soul, and are daily treading their earthly rounds of business and of pleasure *with a merry heart.* All the heavy artillery of divine vengeance is ready to be discharged upon them as soon as the door of death opens and lets them into the invisible world; and yet they walk on fearless and joyful, and have no guard or defence from all this misery, besides their own vain presumption. Stupid creatures, to lie down at night, and awake in the morning within an inch of hell, and yet secure and fearless! They live *without God in the world,* and that even in this land of light and hope, where he offers to visit them with all his graces; and yet they are hastening hourly to the eternal world, where they must meet and behold him in all his terrors.

Will nothing awaken you, O ye obstinate transgressors against God, ye obstinate rejecters of his grace and gospel? Will nothing warn you to *flee from the wrath to come?* But just thus *it was in the days of Noah;* the sinners of that generation would not hearken to that preacher of righteousness; and even when they saw the clouds of heaven grow

big and black over their heads, and the rain began to be poured down from the skies. little did they imagine that it would have drowned the earth, till they were overwhelmed with the rising destruction. And so *shall it be in the days of the Son of man,* when all the warnings of the preachers have been despised, and the threatened vengeance of the book of God derided, when they have set up for bold and witty scoffers, and impudently demanded, *Where is the promise of his coming?* 2 Peter iii. 4. Then shall *the great and terrible day of the Lord come,* and pour out upon them the full measure of wrath and indignation.

" Is it not time, my friends, to bethink yourselves whether this be your case? Is it not time for every one of us to examine our souls? Am I exposed to this danger? Am I every moment on the brink of this misery, and yet content to continue so one night or one day longer? Can I ever hope to escape the fury of a God, while I thus abuse his patience? Or can I have any expectation of living with him as my God hereafter, if I never seek after him here? The face of God, as a stranger in the world to come, carries infinite terrors in it, and yet we are content to be strangers to him, and to live without his acquaintance. *The wrath of God abides upon* every man who is unregenerate in this life, and *who has not trusted in the name of the Son of God;* John iii. 36. yet they are thoughtless of it, for they feel it not; but the moment when they shall awake into the world of spirits, that wrath will be felt with sudden and dreadful anguish, as a most insupportable burden, and will crush all the powers of the soul into torment."

V. " It deserves and it demands our highest gratitude to the great God, our humblest acknowledgments, and our most exalted praises to his majesty and his mercy, that we, who have long ago deserved this misery, are not yet plunged into the midst of it:" That we have not been entirely cut off from the land of hope, and sent down to this destruction. Blessed be the name and the grace of God for ever and ever.

" While there are thousands who have been sent down to the place of punishment, whence there is no redemption, before they had continued so long in sin as many of us have done, what a peculiar instance is it of divine long-suffering and goodness, that we are not actually put under the sting of this living worm, under this fiery vengeance from the hand of God? What was there in us that should secure us from this destruction, while we continued in our state of guilt, rebellion, and impenitence? Have we not seen many sinners on our right hand, and on our left, cut off in their sins, and to all appearance they seem to be sent down to the place of sorrows? What is it but the special mercy and distinguishing favour of God that has dealt thus kindly with us, and spared and saved us, week after week, and month after month, while we continued in our iniquities, and has given us space for repentance and hope? *What shall we render to the Lord for all his* patience and long-suffering, even to this day? How often have we incurred the penalty of the law of God, and the fiery sentence of condemnation, by our repeated iniquities, both against the authority and the grace of God? And yet we are alive in his presence, and are hearing the words of hope and salvation. O let us look back and shudder at the thoughts of that dreadful precipice, on the edge of which we have so long wandered. Let us fly for escape *to the refuge that is set before us,* and give a thousand glories to the divine mercy that we are not plunged into this perdition."

VI. Let us learn from this description of hell, and our imminent danger of it, " the infinite value and worth of the gospel of Christ:" This gospel, which calls us aloud *to fly from the wrath to come,* and points out to us the only effectual way to escape it.

What can all the riches of the Indies do to relieve us under the guilt and distress into which sin had brought us? What can the favour of princes, and the flattering honours of the world, do to rescue us from this danger? What can the highest gust of sensuality, and the most exquisite delights of flesh and blood, do to secure us against this overwhelming misery? It is only the gospel of the blessed Jesus is our refuge, and our safety from the tremendous destruction.

"What are the heights, and depths, and lengths of human science, with all the boasted acquisitions of the brightest genius of mankind? Learning and science can measure the globe, can sound the depths of the sea, can compass the heavens, can mete out the distances of the sun and moon, and mark out the path of every twinkling star for many ages past or ages to come; but they cannot acquaint us with the way of salvation from this long, this endless distress. What are all the sublime reasonings of philosophers upon the abstruse and most difficult subjects? What is the whole circle of sciences which human wit and thought can trace out and comprehend? Can they deliver us from the guilt of one sin? Can they free us from one of the terrors of the Almighty? Can they assuage the torment of a wounded spirit, or guard us from the impression of divine indignation? Alas! they are all but trifles, in comparison of this blessed gospel, which saves us from eternal anguish and death.

"It is the gospel that teaches us the holy skill to prevent this worm of conscience from gnawing the soul, and instructs us how to kill it in the seed and first springs of it, to mortify the corruptions of the heart, to resist the temptations of Satan, and where to wash away the guilt of sin. It is this blessed gospel that clearly discovers to us how we may guard against the fire of divine wrath, or rather how to secure our souls from becoming the fuel of it. It is this book that teaches us to sprinkle the blood of Christ on a guilty conscience by faith, that is, by receiving him as sincere penitents, and thereby defends us from the angel of death and destruction. This is that experimental philosophy of the saints in heaven, whereby they have been released from the bonds of their sins, have been rescued *from the curse of the law*, and been secured from the gnawing worm and the devouring fire.

"A serious meditation of hell in its exquisite pain and sorrow, will enhance our value of the salvation of Christ, and will exalt our esteem and honour of the love of God, who has delivered us from eternal death. If we will but appoint our thoughts to dwell a little on the terrors and vengeance from which the blessed Jesus has rescued us by his glorious undertaking, if we will stretch the powers of our souls, and survey the lengths, and the breadths, and the depths of this distress and misery which we have deserved, this will discover to us *the heights, and the depths, and the lengths of his love*, who submitted himself to the curses of the law of God, and *was made a curse for us, that he might redeem us* to the possession of an eternal blessing; *Gal.* iii. 23. This will shew us what *exceeding riches of the grace of God* have been laid out upon us for our salvation. This will spread before us the unmeasurable love of Jesus, which has brought him down from the bosom of his Father into such agonies as he sustained in the garden, and on the cross, that he might rescue us from *the wrath to come.* O what immense and endless debts of gratitude and love are due from every ransomed sinner, who has been released from the bonds of his guilt, and from all this wretchedness, by the love of God the Father, and the grace of his Son Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and honour, and most exalted praise, for ever and ever!" *Amen.*

DISCOURSE XIII.

THE ETERNAL DURATION OF THE PUNISHMENTS IN HELL.

MARK ix. 46.

WHERE THEIR WORM DIETH NOT, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.

SECTION I.

ARGUMENTS TO PROVE THE PERPETUITY OF HELL.

WHEN the great and blessed God had a mind to make known his wisdom, his power, and his goodness amongst creatures, he built this world as a theatre, in which those perfections of his nature might be displayed amidst the various works of his hands: He spread it round with the blessings of life and pleasure, he overhung it with a canopy of skies and stars, and placed the glorious bodies of the sun and moon there to appear in their alternate seasons; and even amidst the ruins which sin has brought into this world, yet still every eye may behold the traces of an almighty, an all-wise, and a bountiful God. When the same divine and sovereign Being designed to exalt and diffuse the wonders of his grace among the best of his creatures, he built a heaven for them, and furnished it with unknown varieties of beauty and blessing: And we would hope in our appointed season to be raised to this upper world, and there to behold the riches of divine magnificence and mercy, and to be sharers thereof among the rest of the happy inhabitants.

But since sin and wickedness has entered into his creation of men and angels, he saw it necessary also to display the terrors of his justice, and *to make his wrath and indignation known* amongst rebellious creatures, that he might maintain a just awe and reverence for his own authority, and a constant hatred of sin through all his dominions. For this purpose he has built a hell, a dreadful building indeed, in some dismal region of his vast empire, where he has amassed together all that is grievous and formidable to sensible beings, and wicked spirits carry their own inward hell thither with them, a hell of sin and misery; and though he has sent his own Son to acquaint us with the distresses and agonies of that doleful world, and to warn us of the danger of falling into it; yet if any of us should be so unhappy as to continue in an obstinate state of impenitence and disobedience to God, we shall be made to confess, by dreadful experience, that *not one half hath been told us.*

Therefore hath God set before us these terrors in his word, that we might fly from this *wrath to come;* and avoid these sufferings: And therefore do his ministers, by his commission, proceed to publish this vengeance and indignation of the Lord, that sinners might be awakened *to lay hold on the hope that is set before them*, and might be affrighted from plunging themselves into this pit of anguish, whence there is no redemption.

We have taken a short survey of these miseries, in the kind and nature of them, in some former discourses; and we are now come to the last thing contained in our Saviour's description of hell, and that is the perpetuity of it: The misery is everlasting in both the

parts of it, for *the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.* The arguments which shall be employed to prove it are such as these:

Argument I. The express words of Christ and his apostles pronounce the punishments eternal; and surely these words are given to us to be the foundation of our faith and practice, and the rules of our hope and fear. My text seems to carry plain and unanswerable evidence in it. *The worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.* And it is many times repeated in this chapter, and that with a special accent on the eternal duration of it, to make that circumstance of it more observed, and to aggravate the terror. Such an awful repetition from the lips of the Son of God should make the sound of the vengeance dwell longer on the ear, and the threatening sink deeper into the soul. Let us next observe the final sentence which Christ, as judge, pronounces against impenitent sinners among the sons of men, as well as against fallen spirits, in *Matt.* xxv. 41. It is this, *Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:* And as soon as the sentence is pronounced; it is immediately executed, as our Saviour foretels in verse 46. *These shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal.* What he pronounces as judge, he foretels also as a prophet, that it shall be put in execution.

The express word of God, in describing the punishment of sinners by the pen of his two apostles Paul and John, declares the same thing; 2 Thess. i. 9. *They shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.* And the book of the Revelation gives us assurance, that these miseries shall have no end; *Rev.* xiv. 10, 11. The antichristian idolaters, *who worship the beast, shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out, without mixture, into the cup of his indignation, and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone—in the presence of the Lamb, and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.* Jude, the apostle, bears his testimony in the same manner, verse 6. *the* damned *spirits, who kept not their first station, are said to be cast down into hell, and bound in chains of everlasting darkness.* Now suppose a man plunged into a pit of thick darkness, by the command of God, and bound there with everlasting chains; what hope can he ever have of deliverance? And if Christ, and his apostles, who were taught by him and by his blessed Spirit, assert this punishment shall be eternal, who shall dare to contradict them? Who is there so rash and confident as to say, "This torment shall not be everlasting, this worm one day shall die, and this fire shall be quenched? Does it not approach to the crime of contradicting the Almighty, and the true God?

II. There is a sort of infinite evil in sin, arising from the consideration of the person against whom it is committed, that is, the great and blessed God; for every crime, according to the law of nature, and the common sense of mankind, takes its aggravation from the dignity of the person offended, as well as from the heinousness of the act; so reproaches or assaults against a king, or a father, are much more criminal and heinous than the same assaults or reproaches cast on an equal or an inferior; but all sin being an offence against God, an infinite object, and a violation of his law, is a dishonour of infinite majesty, an affront to the divine authority, and therefore its aggravations arise in that proportion to a sort of infinity, and require an equal punishment. But because the nature of a creature cannot suffer infinite punishment in the intenseness of the pain, therefore he must bear it to an infinite duration, that is, to all everlasting.

When divine justice pronounces a sentence against the sinner equal to the demerit of sin, it must be infinite, that is, eternal; and the sinner shall never be released from the prison and the punishment *till he has paid the utmost farthing;* Matt. ix. 15. and till he has made satisfaction to God equal to his demands, and the demerit of the offence. I know this argument is treated with much contempt and derision among those of the moderns, who would diminish the evil of sin, and shorten the punishment of it: But it is much easier to ridicule it than to answer it: A jest is no refutation. And after my survey of it, I think, without prejudice or partiality, the force of it seems to me unanswerable as to the desert of sin; and I am not ashamed to employ it in the support of this truth. It is but a very feeble oppposition can be made to it by those who say, that " if sin be counted an infinite evil, and must have infinite punishment, then all sins are equal, and will require equal punishment," for there are no different degrees of infinity, or in things which are infinite. But our Saviour has taught us, that there are certainly various degrees of punishment as well as of sin: He assures us, *that it shall be more tolerable for the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than it shall be for Capernaum and Bethsaida,* where he had preached and wrought his wonders; *Luke* x. 12—15. and the reason is plain, *viz.* because the sins of Sodom were less than theirs.

And it is very easy to answer this pretence or objection about the equality of all sins, for sins may have different degrees of guilt and aggravation as to the act, where the object is the same, whether this object be finite or infinite; as the murder of a father or a king, is a much greater crime than a reproach or slander cast on the same persons. So the wilful hatred of God and blasphemy against him, with continued malice and public violent opposition to his name, or law, or gospel, are far greater sins than a single neglect of his daily worship for fear of persecution, or a distrusting his providence, though both have the same infinite being, that is, God, for their object; and in this sense, there is a sort of infinity in each of the crimes.

And accordingly punishments may be proportioned to every crime, for they may differ greatly in the degree of severity and torture, though they may be all equal or eternal in the duration. Sodom and Gomorrah, Capernaum and Bethsaida, may all suffer infinite or everlasting sorrow, and yet the degrees of their pain may be exceeding different all the while. They may have the same infinity of duration, though very different as to the intenseness or degree of the pain.

III. If the iniquities committed in this life were not punished with torment which is everlasting, yet the damned in hell are ever sinning against God, and therefore they provoke the vengeance of God to continue his punishing hand upon them for ever. The law of God in all its demands of duty, its prohibitions of sin, as well as in its sanctions of punishment, continues for ever in force in heaven, and earth, and hell, and we see not how it can be abrogated where it arises from the very nature of God and a creature: And *cursed is he that continues not in all things which the law requires;* Gal. iii. 10. Every new sin demands a new curse and a new punishment, and there is no reason which forbids a righteous governor to cease punishing, while the rebellious creature will not cease to offend, and especially while he maintains an everlasting enmity and rebellion against the law of God his creator.

If there were any humble meltings of repentance in the guilty soul, if there were any sincere mournings in the sinful creature for having offended his Maker, if there were any softness of heart relenting under a sense of the evil of sin, and returning to obedience

and duty, even this would not oblige a righteous and wise governor to forgive the criminal; repentance is no compensation for a wilful offence; nor is it thought unrighteous or unwise for a prince to punish even a penitent offender with death.

But let us propose the case in utmost favour to a sinner against the blessed God, let us imagine that divine wisdom and divine mercy perhaps might be supposed to contrive and to offer some proposals to justice in a way of compassion, and might enquire whether the sentence of punishment could not be reversed, or the terror of it relieved, or some new state of trial proposed. Let it be added in favour of the criminal, that we do not find through all the book of God the actual practice of true repentance beginning among men, but it has been always followed with proportionable degrees of compassion from God: But on the other side, when there is nothing found in the heart of a sinner but obstinacy, and malice, and revenge, cursing and blasphemy against the Almighty, without the least moving or melting into a genuine penitence or holy sorrow, without any meek submission to the majesty and justice of God, or humbly imploring his mercy, what reasonable hope can such wretches have, that their chains of darkness should be broken, and the prisoners released from the vengeance? When they shall curse his justice, because it punishes their crimes, when they shall curse his mercy, because it did not save their souls, and curse and blaspheme the blood of the blessed Jesus, because it has not washed away their sins, what possible excuse can be made for such creatures? Or what possible expectation can there be for such criminals, but an everlasting continuance of the fiery indignation?

Here it will be replied, but why should we suppose, and much more, why should we affirm, the damned will never repent? Are they not free in the other world from this flesh and blood, wherein there are so many unruly passions and appetites? Are they not far remote from all the temptations of flesh and sense, of intemperance, ambition, and covetousness? Have they not understanding to see divine truths more clearly than in this world? Have they not reason to distinguish good and evil, and free-will to choose that which is good? Will they not hate all sin, since they have been so long taught the mischief of sin by their sufferings? And is there any thing fitter than their agonies and torture by fire, to make men know and feel the dreadful evil of sinning against God, and awaken them to repentance?

To this I answer, let us judge a little concerning the sinners in hell, by the practice of sinners on earth. How many wretched creatures are there who have been long imprisoned, and perhaps punished for crimes against the state, and yet persist in their rebellious temper, and are never convinced they were in the wrong, so far as to change their treason into sincere submission, repentance, and obedience? Was not Pharaoh, king of Egypt, an instance of the stubbornness and impenitence of human nature, when in opposition to ten dreadful plagues he would still pursue the flying Israelites, and destroy a people beloved of God? Is not hardness and enmity against the governor often increased by the severe punishments that criminals lie under? Have these punishments any sufficient power to soften their hearts into true repentance?

What though they do not live in the midst of sensual temptations, yet who knows how far their spirits, having been immersed in flesh and blood, may carry with them inward raging appetites to those sinful sensualities and defiling pleasures, of which they are for ever deprived?

Let me ask again, have the devils ever repented in almost six thousand years? Are they not the same enemies to God, and his glory, and his image through all ages? And though the damned spirits of men are absent from this world, and their evil companions on earth, yet are they not in the fittest company to teach them pride and rage, resentment and malice, and the most unfit to teach them humility, repentance, and obedience to God? And when they have perversely sinned away all the means of grace in this life, is it reasonable to imagine, that God will powerfully soften their hearts by his sovereign grace, since he has never given the least hint or instance of it in all the discoveries made in the Bible? And has it not been often one way of God's punishing sinners here in this world, by letting them go on in their iniquity and madness to the end? And why may not the wisdom and justice of God see it fit to treat sinners, who have been incorrigible in this life, by the same method in the world to come?

IV. The natural effects and consequences of sin living in the soul, are misery and torment so long as the soul lives, that is, for ever. Sin, though it be a moral evil, as it is committed against God, yet it is such an enemy to the nature of man, that where it has established its habit and temper in the soul, it naturally prepares constant anguish of conscience and certain misery. A wicked spirit all over averse to God and goodness, gone from this world and all the soothing or busy amusements of it, intense in its desires of happiness, and yet a stranger to all that can make it truly happy, and at the same time shut out by God's righteous judgment, from all the means and hopes of grace, must needs be miserable, and has prepared a state of endless misery for itself, because its nature and duration are immortal. An unholy creature who loves not God, and cannot delight in things holy and heavenly, but derives its chief joy from sinful pleasures, can never taste of felicity, can never relish the satisfactions that come from the knowledge and love, and the enjoyment of God; and when it is torn away, and banished from all the sensible amusements of this life, it must and will be a wretched creature in the world of spirits, and that by the very course of nature: And God cannot be obliged to change the established course of nature to relieve this misery which the sinner had wilfully brought on himself; nor can God make him happy without giving him a new temper of holiness, which he is not obliged to do by any perfection of his nature or any promise of grace.

If the souls of men are immortal, such will their passions be, their desires, their fears, and their sorrows. Now their natural desires of happiness, as I have said, will be intense and strong, when God, the spring of all happiness, who hath been renounced and abandoned by them, hath now for ever forsaken them, and separated himself from them. What can there remain for them but everlasting darkness and despair, without a dawn of hope through all the ages of eternity? Their guilty consciences, with the views of God's unchangeable holiness, will for ever fill them with new fears and terrors, what shall be the next punishment they are to suffer. Such is the state of devils at this time, who expect a more dreadful punishment at the great day, as several places of scripture make evident. Their being immersed in the guilt of sin, and under the constant and tyrannical dominion of it, will overwhelm them with present grief, with cutting sorrows and horror unspeakable, which will sink into the centre of their souls, and make them an eternal terror and plague to themselves.

Again, let us consider their immortality of soul will be spent in thinking: And what comfortable or hopeful object is there in heaven, earth, or hell, on which they can fix or employ their thoughts for one moment, to give a short release from their extreme

misery? So that they are left in endless successions of most painful thoughts and passions from the very nature of things.

Again, suppose this body of mine were by nature immortal, and was designed by my Creator in its constitution to live for ever; and suppose by my own folly and madness, my own wilful indulgence of appetite and passion, I had brought some dreadful distemper into my flesh which was found to be incurable, whether it be the gout or the stone, or some more terrible malady of the nervous kind, must not this gout, by necessity of nature, become an immortal gout? Must not these distempers be immortal distempers, and create eternal pain? And is the God of nature bound to work a miracle to cure and heal these diseases which I have wilfully brought upon myself by my own iniquities, and that after many warnings? Is it unrighteous in God to let me languish on amidst my agonies and groans as long as my nature continues in being, that is, to immortality? And especially when there are valuable ends in divine providence, and God's government of the world to be subserved, by suffering such wilful, rebellious, and impenitent creatures to become sacrifices to their own iniquity and his justice, and perpetual monuments to other worlds of their own madness and his holiness. Such is the case of a sinful spirit, and therefore a God of justice may pronounce upon it, and execute the eternal misery.

SECTION II.

THE STRONGEST AND MOST PLAUSIBLE OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE PERPETUITY OF HELL ANSWERED.

I THINK these reasons, which have been given, are sufficient to justify the ministers of the gospel in representing the punishments of hell as everlasting: But man, sinful man does not love to hear of this dreadful perpetuity of hell: They would fain find some period to these sorrows, they search on every side if there be no way for escape from this prison, no door of mercy, no cranny of hope left among the reasons of things, or among the attributes, or the transactions of the blessed God: And they are ever proposing some methods to cut short this eternity, which scripture ascribes to the punishment of impenitent sinners. I shall endeavour therefore here to give a fair and plain answer to the strongest objections against this doctrine which I ever yet have met with.

Objection I. The first objection is raised from a criticism on the words of scripture. The Greek and Hebrew words, say they, which we translate eternal and everlasting, where the torments of hell are mentioned, are not always used for proper and complete eternity, they sometimes signify only a long duration: So God gave Abraham and his seed the land of Canaan *for an everlasting possession*, Gen. xvii. 8. but now the Turks possess it. Several of the statutes of the levitical law were said to be everlasting, *Lev.* xvi. 34. But they are all abolished in the gospel. The sons of Aaron had an *everlasting priesthood* conferred upon them, *Exod.* xl. 15. But this office is cancelled by the kingdom of the Messiah, and finished for ever.

Besides let it be remembered, say the objectors, that the Hebrew word עולם *Olam*, and the Greek Αἰων and Αἰωνες, signify only the various ages or periods of time which belong to the duration of creatures, or to some constitutions of God concerning his creatures: And they should be translated an age, or ages, more properly than any thing else: And the adjective Αἰωνιος, when applied to creatures, can relate only to these ages; but these

expressions were never designed to enter into God's own eternity, either before the existence of this world or after the consummation of it: Upon which reason it is highly improper and absurd to assert, that the duration or punishment of creatures in hell shall be properly eternal and equal to the duration of the blessed God himself. Now since every thing in God's transactions towards his creatures is sometimes limited by these Αἰωνες or ages, which are periods of time that shall be finished, why may not the damnation and the sorrows of hell be also finished and cancelled at a certain length of years, though the common words, which we translate eternal and everlasting, be ascribed to them in scripture?

Answer I. These are the same words both in Greek and Hebrew, by which God expresses his own eternity, which is absolute and complete without end. *He is the everlasting God;* Gen. xxi. 33. *The eternal God, and his everlasting arms;* Deut. xxxiii. 27. Rom. i. 20. and xvi. 26. and several other places. These are the words also by which the scripture expresses the duration of the felicities of heaven, and the eternal life and happiness of the saints; *Dan.* xii. 2. *Rom.* vi. 23. *John* iii. 15—18. Now, why should we not suppose the same words to signify the same duration, when the Old or New Testament speaks of *everlasting burnings* as the vengeance of God against the wicked; *Isaiah* xxxiii. 14. or *everlasting shame and contempt?* Dan. xii. 2. And especially where the joys of the saints, and the misery of sinners, are set in opposition to one another in the same text, as in Dan. xii. 2. and Matt. xxv. 46. *The wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal?* And yet further, when we find this doctrine sufficiently confirmed by many other places of scripture which set forth the eternity of these torments? I grant, that the eternity of God himself, before this world began, or after its consummation, has something in it so immense and so incomprehensible, that in my most mature thoughts I do not choose to enter into those infinite abysses; nor do I think we ought usually, when we speak concerning creatures, to affirm positively, that their existence shall be equal to that of the blessed God, especially with regard to the duration of their punishment; perhaps this sort of language may carry in it something beyond what we are called to discourse about, at least in this mortal state, and therefore such comparisons are more safely omitted.

But I would remark here still, that these Αἰωνες, or ages both of reward and punishment, which are pronounced concerning saints or sinners, do but begin in their perfection at the end of this world, and thence it follows, that they must enter far into the eternity of God's existence yet to come: And the saints will be made happy, and the sinners will be punished for long ages after the end of this world, and all the Αἰωνες, or ages of it. And though God, by his Spirit, has not been pleased to make this comparison expressly, nor assert our duration commensurate with his own, yet he is pleased to express the duration of the punishment of sinners in the same common language and phrases, whereby he expresses his own duration, and the happiness of the saints; and hereby he encourages us to express these punishments by the same common words in our language too, rather than venture to cut them short by a Greek or Hebrew criticism, without any divine warrant or necessity.*

* The word ἀΐδιος, perpetual, is applied to the chains of devils; *Jude*, verse 6. as well as to God; *Rom.* i. 20. and however the word αἰων and αἰωνες may be used for ages or periods in this world, yet αἰωνες τῶν αἰωνων, or ages of ages, is never applied in all the New Testament to any thing but God or Christ, or the blessedness of saints, or the punishment of sinners; and therefore we may well conclude, that all these four run into an eternity beyond all the supposed periods of this world, and far beyond all our conceptions.

Now are there any sinners so void of understanding, of so daring and desperate a mind, as to venture their eternal all upon such a poor criticism of words? Even upon supposition these terms in the Greek and Hebrew might signify any long duration short of eternity; yet there is a terrible hazard in confining them to this sense, since they do denote a proper eternity, when they describe the duration of the blessed God; and I think we may add also, the duration of the happiness of the saints.

Besides, let it be remembered, that the other expressions of scripture, which denote and pronounce the perpetuity or eternity of these punishments, are not liable to the same criticism or ambiguity of a word. *Their fire shall be unquenchable, or is not quenched, their worm dieth not. They have no rest day nor night, they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever;* Rev. xiv. 10, 11. and xx. 10. These expressions seem to carry with them a more certain signification of the perpetual continuance of the punishment. Now can the tempter and the deceiver of souls have so unhappy an influence over you, as to persuade you to venture onward in the paths of sin, to put off religion and delay your repentance, and neglect the means of salvation, in hopes that hereafter this weak criticism, upon some of the threatenings, may take place before the Judge of the whole earth, and thus excuse or save you? Is not such a sorry refuge and presumption a dangerous and a dismal sign upon impenitent sinners, that sin and Satan have darkened your understanding, and confounded your judgment, as well as hardened your hearts, in order to your everlasting destruction?

Answer II. Suppose the punishments of hell continue only for a long time, and not for an endless immortality, yet this time would certainly be found exceeding long for sinners to bear the torment even according to their own criticisms. Let us consider this matter under some particulars. The jewish dispensation, which is sometimes called everlasting, stood near about fifteen hundred years, from Moses to Christ; and are ye content to languish and groan under torments and miseries, for fifteen hundred years, merely to satisfy your vicious appetites of pleasure for a few days or a few years of this mortal life? Again,

The rebellious sinners, who were destroyed at the flood, and their spirits, which were sent into the prison of hades or hell, were certainly confined there four and twenty hundred years: And if they were released then, as some imagine, by the preaching of Christ to them, it is a long and dreadful time to continue under the vengeance of God; and is it worth while for any man to continue in sin on earth, and to venture this length of punishment in hell? What I build this computation upon, are some expressions of St. Peter; 1 *Peter* iii. 19, 20. where Christ is said *to preach unto the spirits in prison, which some time were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah;* some have supposed, that this text informs us of Christ's descent into hell after his death, and then preaching to those rebels who were drowned in the flood, near two thousand four hundred years before, in order to awaken them to repentance and salvation: Whereas others think this text may be better expounded concerning the Spirit of Christ given to Noah, which made him a preacher of righteousness, when he foretold and threatened a flood of waters, and called men to repentance. But if it should be granted, that those rebellious spirits among the dead did all repent, and were delivered by this preaching of Christ, would you choose to indulge the delights of sin for a short season, and twenty-four hundred years of torment for it?

Yet further, the devils have lain under punishment near six thousand years, *viz.* four thousand before Christ came, and almost two thousand years since, which may be thus

computed from what St. Jude says of them. *The angels who kept not their first station, they were cast into chains of darkness* probably before the creation of this our world, for they were fallen, and tempted Adam to sin, as soon as this world was made: And they had been confined in these chains from that time about four thousand years before Christ came, and are waiting still for yet sharper punishment at the judgment of the great day, *Jude*, verse 6. And it is evident that they are conscious of this terror and this future increase of punishment, for they expostulated with our Saviour; Matt. viii. 29. *Art thou come to torment us before the time:* Now it is near two thousand years since Christ came, and from the time of their sinning, unto this day, it is almost six thousand years: And when the great day of judgment comes, their fiercer punishment is but then to begin: And are not the devil and his angels sentenced and confined to dwell together with the wicked children of Adam, when they shall be consigned at that dreadful day to the same everlasting fire and torment, which was prepared for those evil spirits? And who knows when their torment will end? Now what folly and hardness of heart, or rather what madness is it for men to continue in their sins, to delay their return to God, and abandon the grace of the gospel under this foolish flattery and wild presumption, that above six thousand years hence perhaps a certain day may come when the worm of conscience will die, and the fire of hell will be quenched? Such presumption is madness and distraction rather than reasoning.

Objection II. The second objection is derived from the justice and equity of God: Surely may some person say, the justice of God will proportion the punishment to the offence; but since our sins are but the actions of mortal and short-lived creatures, and are committed in a few years of time, why should the punishment be immortal, and the anguish be lengthened out to eternity? Can a righteous God pronounce such a severe and unjust sentence, and execute it in its full dimensions.

Answer. It is not the length of time which wicked men spent in committing their sins, nor the nature of the persons who have sinned, that determines the measure of punishment, but the dignity of that infinitely glorious Being, against whom sin is committed, that gives such a high aggravation as to require punishment without end. How many instances are there amongst men wherein offenders against their neighbours, or against a magistrate, who spent but a few moments in the crime, yet are doomed to imprisonment for months and years? And a lower degree of trespass against a king, which is short of high-treason, is sometimes punished with confiscation of goods, and with poverty and close imprisonment for life: And by the same reason, the sins of men being committed against a God of infinite majesty, require an endless punishment, as I have proved in the second argument: And therefore divine justice pronounces, or inflicts no longer penalty than the crimes of men deserve, according to their aggravations. If any sinners tarry then till they have paid the utmost farthing to divine justice, I grant God will release them, but he has given us no hope before.

Objection III. The third objection is drawn from the sovereignty and goodness of God. It is granted, say they, that the threatenings of eternal death are denounced against sinners in scripture, yet it is not necessary God should execute them to the full. When a law is made, the threatenings of it only declare what punishment the offender shall be exposed to, and shall be obliged to bear when it is inflicted; but these expressions in a law do not oblige the government to inflict that sentence with all its terrors. It is granted, that in the case of promises, truth and veracity oblige the promiser to fulfil

them punctually, because the right of the thing promised passes over to that other person to whom the promise was made, and he hath such a right to require it, that it is injustice to withhold it from him; and therefore everlasting felicity must be given to the righteous: But in threatenings the case is otherwise; for though the full punishment is due to sinners, yet they will never require the execution of it; and the goodness of God will incline him to relieve the sufferer, and to release him from the severity of such punishment, where his veracity or truth does not forbid it. To this I answer two ways:

Answer I. I will not debate this point of law now, how far a governor of sovereign and absolute authority can dispense with his own threatenings, can omit the execution of them, relax the degree of threatened punishment, or shorten the duration of it: But let it be considered, that here is not only the threatening of a God, the universal Governor, but the prediction of this eternal punishment, by a God who cannot lie. God's own truth and veracity are concerned in this case, since his Son Jesus, who is the greatest of his messengers, together with the prophets and apostles, have in the name of God often foretold, that these punishments shall be eternal: And therefore whatsoever an absolute governor might do, as to shortening the punishment threatened, in a way of mercy and relaxation; yet I cannot see how the truth and veracity of God himself, or the veracity of his Son Jesus Christ, who is *the great prophet*, or the truth of the rest of his prophets and messengers can be maintained, if this punishment be not executed according to the many express predictions of it. These all agree to tell us, by inspiration from heaven, in various forms of speech, that the torments of hell shall be everlasting; and as I hinted, *the man Jesus*, who pronounces this eternal sentence as a Lord and Judge, foretels it also as a prophet, that the execution of it shall be to all everlasting.

Answer II. Obstinate and impenitent sinners have no reason to expect, that the goodness of God should release them from their miseries, since the justice and the holiness, the righteous government and authority of God in his law require and demand their due honour, as well as his goodness. Do we not see these honours of divine justice, and of God's hatred of sin, have been continually demanded and executed in the infinite and innumerable evils, sorrows, miseries, diseases and deaths, that have been spread over this world almost six thousand years because of sin? Nor does his goodness forbid or hinder it.

And let it be remembered too, that all this immense variety and long succession of plagues and terrors arose originally from the just indignation and resentment of God against one sin, even that of the first man. Who was it that burned *Sodom and Gomorrah with fire from heaven?* Who was it that chained fallen angels in darkness to a more terrible judgment? Was it not a God of supreme goodness? Who sent famines and pestilences, and slaughters all over the earth in many distinct generations, whereby mankind have been made abundantly wretched and plunged into millions of distresses? And yet the goodness of God abides for ever. And while the great God is acting according to the glories of his natnre and government in punishing rebellious creatures, his goodness will feel no soft and sensible impressions from all their groans and outcries; but if I may so express it, will be changed into just indignation without end. And the language of it to those impenitent wretches will be this. *Because I have called and ye refused,—ye have set at nought all my counsel and would none of my reproof: I will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruc-*

tion as a whirlwind, when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall ye call upon me but I will not answer; ye shall seek me early, but ye shall not find me; for ye hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: Ye would none of my counsels, ye despised all my rebukes; therefore shall ye eat of the fruit of your own way, and be filled with your own devices; Prov. i. 24—31. Take them, angels, *bind them hand and foot, and cast them into everlasting fire and utter darkness; there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth;* Matt. xxii. 13.

Let us cease then to murmur against the threatenings and the transactions of the great God, till we are become fitter judges of his perfections and their demands. Let us cavil no more against his conduct and government, till we can teach him how far his punishing justice shall go in the execution of his threatenings, and till we can assign to him the point and limit where his goodness shall interpose and restrain that justice.

Objection IV. The fourth objection is derived from the rectitude of the nature of God, or his common equity and mercy united, which has been represented in this manner. Suppose one of the damned spirits among mankind should address himself to the great God in such sort of language as this, "Lord, I was created by thy sovereign pleasure without my own will, I did not desire to be made, much less to be born in such a relation to Adam, whereby I brought a sinful nature into the world with me: But I was united by thy power and pleasure to a body which had the seeds of sin and misery in it: There were strong appetites and violent passions mingled with my flesh and blood, which I myself had no hand in procuring; they fermented in me with much vehemence, and I was tempted to many excesses: I made some resistance at first, and many times tried to subdue them, but I was overcome: At last I suffered myself to be carried away by the stream of these sinful affections and appetites which I could not possibly avoid, nor easily subdue. Is it agreeable to thy equity, O blessed God, to punish such a poor wretch with everlasting torments? And can thy mercy continue to see this my misery for ever and ever, and not help me? I intreat thee, O thou almighty Author of my being, to destroy and annihilate me utterly soul and body; take away this being, which I never asked nor desired; nay, which I would not have consented to accept among the sinful race of mankind, because in this track of generation and existence I stood much more likely to be miserable than to be happy."

Answer I. As for the reasonableness and equity of the conveyance and communication of the original effects of the sin of Adam through every generation of man, it is granted there are some difficulties attending it; but these are generally answered by the writers on that subject; and for me to divert from my present discourse, in order to debate this point here, would be too tedious.

The equity of this wise and awful constitution of God has been lately vindicated in a large treatise on the "Ruin and Recovery of Mankind," especially in the second edition of that book. But it is enough for my present argument to say, that God himself will make the equity of this constitution to appear with much more evidence and conviction in the last great day, when millions of actual criminals shall stand before the judgment-seat, who owe the first spring of their sin and ruin to our common parent, and yet will fall under the righteous condemnation of the Judge.

Answer II. When God decreed to give thee a being, O sinner, and designed thee in his eternal ideas to be a man, placed among a thousand blessings of nature and providence, it was then a favour of thy Creator; for thou wert designed also in this original

divine idea to have full sufficiency of power to become wise and happy. It was also a favour from thy Creator that he took all these thy sufficiencies of power, and put them into the hand of one man, even the father of thy race, because he was as wise, and holy, and as well able as any man of his posterity could be, to preserve his station in the favour of God, and to secure thy happiness together with his own; and he had much stronger obligations to obey his Maker, and more powerful motives to secure thy happiness than thou thyself, or any single man could possibly have, because he was intrusted with the felicity of so many millions of his own dear offspring as well as his own. Now though Adam, thy first father, being thus furnished with sufficiencies of power, and with the strongest obligations to preserve himself and thee, has actually sinned and ruined himself and his offspring; this is indeed an unhappy truth; but the great God is not to blame, who has not only acted wisely but kindly towards his creatures in this constitution, because, so far as we can judge, it was much more probable that Adam would have maintained his innocence and his happiness, together with that of his offspring. Again,

When the race of man was ruined, and God saw that every man would come into the world under unhappy circumstances of guilt and corruption of nature, he provided a covenant of grace, and brought thee into some knowledge of it: And this had been effectual to have recovered and saved thee from the ruins of the fall if thou hadst exerted all thy force, employed all thy natural powers of understanding and will for this purpose, and used all thy diligence to follow the methods of his grace, and hadst sought earnestly for divine aids: For there is no man among the damned is able to say, "I have done every thing that was in my power to do:" No man shall be condemned for what was utterly impossible for him to avoid: It is confessed indeed thou art laid under some hardships and difficulties by the sin of *thy first father;* yet it is thy own actual and personal crimes for which thou art here condemned at this judgment, wherein *every one shall be judged and rewarded according to his works;* 2 Cor. v. 10. It is for many wilful offences against the law of God, and for sinning against the offers of divine grace; it is for obstinacy against thy own conscience, and all the outward and inward monitions of thy duty, that thou art fallen under this sentence, and because thou didst not labour and strive against sin, and resist it even to the end of thy state of life and trial. Thou hast had many an inward reproof for sin, many a secret or public call to virtue, and perhaps loud and fair warnings of thy danger; but thou hast turned a deaf ear to them all, and it is thy own folly, obstinacy, and iniquity, that have brought thee into this misery, and thou must eat the fruit of thy own works.

If there should be any person found indeed among Jews, gentiles or christians, who justly complain, "I have not had a fair and full state of trial, and yet I am condemned," I think we may grant that the righteous God will release such from their misery, after they have worn out a proper number of years in punishment proportionable to their past crimes; and that there shall be a fair, and full, and proper state of trial appointed to them before they shall be utterly and irretrievably miserable: But if no such person be found there, if there be no such just complaint to be made among the millions of the damned, then they may be still continued in their prison and punishment without any imputation upon divine justice and equity.

Answer III. Whensoever any such criminal in hell shall be found making such a sincere and mournful address to the righteous and merciful Judge of all, if at the same

time he is truly humble and penitent for his past sins, and is grieved at his heart for having offended his Maker, and melts into sincere repentance, I cannot think that a God of perfect equity and rich mercy will continue such a creature under his vengeance; but rather, that the perfections of God will contrive a way for escape, though God has not given us here any revelation of such special grace as this. But on the other hand, whatever melting and moving speeches may be made by sinners here on earth, in compassion to the sinners who are gone before them to hell; yet if no such person be ever found in hell, truly and humbly repenting of his sins, nor have we any reason to think there ever will, why should a righteous God be obliged to cease punishing a rebel who only is vexed and raging under his own chains, and who continues in the spirit of obstinacy and rebellion against God, and will not repent of it?

Objection the fifth is derived from the "mercy and compassion of a God, compared with the mercy and compassion of man." Surely the compassion of the ever blessed God, who has described himself *rich in mercy, abundant in goodness, and whose very name is love*, 1 John iv. 8. must have transcendent tenderness and pity towards his creatures, *the work of his hands*, above all the compassions that any one fellow-creature can express towards another. Now the very thought and name of eternal punishments, or endless torment, is such as seems to shock the nature of a good-natured man; and though he was never so much injured, yet he would never have a thought of wishing his enemy any kind of eternal punishment for it, much less of condemning him to everlasting misery, and supporting him in being on purpose to suffer it; and therefore we cannot suppose that God will do it.

This objection is further strengthened by an expression of our Saviour himself, who says, Mark xviii. 19. *there is none good, save one, that is God:* As much as to say, there is none equal or comparable in goodness to God himself: And it is further supported still by the common notions which good men have of God; those expressions in the apocryphal writings confirm it; 2 *Esdras* v. 33. "Then said the Lord unto me, thou art sore troubled in mind for Israel: Lovest thou that people more than he that made them?" And in the same book, chapter viii. 47. "Thou comest far short, that thou shouldst be able to love my creature more than I." Now, since no good man could wish such a curse or mischief to his worst and most wicked enemy, as a torment without end, surely we cannot conceive the great God will ever be so severe as to inflict it.

Answer I. It is readily allowed, that God has more goodness than any creature, but God has also more wisdom and knowledge, which concur with his goodness in all his actions, and he forms a much juster judgment concerning the evil and demerits of sin and rebellion against himself, than it is possible for any creature to form: And I think I may boldly assert, none can know the complete evil of sin, or its full desert, but that same glorious Being against whom sin is committed, who knows well the dignity of his own nature and his own law, and what unspeakable injury is done thereto by the sins of men. Now his goodness in all his transactions must be regulated and limited by this infinite wisdom; and if a man does not see and consent to the just demerits of sin against his Maker, it is because he has less wisdom and knowledge than the great God has, and his tenderness and compassion may run into very great excesses, and may be in some instances a sign of his weakness and folly, as well as of his goodness and pity, as I shall shew under the next answer.

At present let us represent the case in a common instance. When criminals go to

execution from month to month, or from year to year, in this great city; and especially if some of them have a handsome and agreeable appearance, and if they are wringing their hands with outcries, and vexing their own hearts, and are stung by their own consciences for their having brought this misery upon themselves, you will find several of the spectators of so tender a make as to grieve for the execution of such criminals, and to wish in their hearts it was in their power to save them. And yet further, if there are numbers of these wicked creatures that are sent at once to the punishment of the sword or the gallows, there may be many of these spectators grieving for them, and pitying them, and perhaps exclaiming against the severity of the law, and the cruelty of the judge, for condemning such malefactors to death.

But do all these weepers and complainers judge justly of the case? Do they consider how pernicious and ruinous a thing it would be to a government to let such traitors go unpunished? Do they know, that it is a piece of clemency and goodness to the innocent to punish the wicked? Or that it is a piece of necessary honour due to the laws, to make those who insolently break them sustain the penalty that the law has appointed? Do they remember that the few good qualities, or supposed talents, or fine appearances which these offenders are possessed of, should outweigh the demands of the law and justice, the peace of the nation or kingdom, and the restraint of others from the same crimes?

Answer II. The goodness of God, the eternal Spirit, is a much superior thing to the tenderness and compassion of man dwelling in flesh and blood. Man grows compassionate by a sort of sympathy or sensation of the miseries which his fellow-creatures endure; and though this is exceeding useful for many purposes of human life, and therefore God planted it in our natures; yet it has so much mixture of animal nature with it, that it frequently degenerates into weakness, fondness, and folly. And indeed if every tender creature must be gratified in this weakness, and form the rules of government, there would never a malefactor fall under execution, but the vilest criminals would be spared, though the government were ruined.

On the other hand, the goodness or mercy of God is a sedate willingness or design to do good to creatures, and particularly to the miserable, but always according to the directions of wisdom and holiness. As God cannot have such anger, resentment, or cruelty in his nature, as mankind may fall into when they are punishing offenders, so properly speaking, he has no such sort of passionate tenderness and sympathy in sparing them: Though the words of greatest affection are sometimes used by the sacred writers to figure out the mercies of God to man; yet God both punishes and spares according to the calm and righteous exercises of his wisdom, and not under the influence of such passions as we feel. Since therefore the exercise of such sort of passions, amongst men oftentimes appears to be the weakness of nature, joined with their ignorance of the rules of equity, is it reasonable that the great and all-wise God should make such creatures his patterns in the limitation of the exercises of his justice? Or that he should be as weak as they are, and as much moved to swerve from the rules of his own righteous government by such a sort of tenderness as ignorant, weak and foolish man may sometimes express towards criminals in their deserved misery?

It is readily granted, that a wise and a good man may and ought to be sorry and grieved, that any of his fellow-creatures should be so vicious as to bring themselves under so severe a penalty by their own wilful crimes; but still in their calmest and wisest thoughts they acknowledge the wisdom and equity of the government, in inflicting

such penalties upon those who heinously offend, and they acquiesce in the sentence and the execution.

Our blessed Lord Jesus himself, who was the wisest and best of creatures, looked upon the city of Jerusalem with an eye of compassion, and wept over it; Luke xiii. 34. *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not? Therefore behold your house is left unto you desolate.* Let it be observed here, that our Saviour had the bowels, and compassions, and tenderness of the best of men: but he still maintains the vindictive exercise of the government of God. "Your desolation must and shall come upon you, nor will I forbid or withhold it." And I am sure the human nature of our blessed Saviour was formed nearest to the image of God beyond any creature besides; and as I have hinted before, it is he who is the supreme messenger of his Father's love, that has pronounced these eternal punishments upon impenitent sinners in many parts of his ministry.

Answer III. How far will these objectors permit the justice of God to go in the punishment of impenitent sinners? If eternal punishment must neither be threatened nor inflicted, lest divine goodness be injured, then all mankind, even the worst and vilest of criminals, must certainly be one day delivered from their miseries; and thus the great God, who is infinitely offended, is bound to finish his wrath one day, and return in mercy to the offenders, whether they return to him by repentance or no. What! may the criminal rebel creature with impudence and spite affront the Creator infinitely, and must not the Creator have a right to demand equal vengeance? No, he must not, according to these writers: For if the essential goodness of God do certainly forbid eternal punishments, these absurdities, as gross as they appear, will be the necessary consequents of it: And though the creature be not restrained from sinning, yet the blessed God will be utterly restrained from punishing: And is this a doctrine fit to be believed by christians, or to be taught by those who have no commission for it from their Bible? Or indeed, will the light of nature and reason ever justify and support this sort of pleading?

Objection the sixth is drawn from the wisdom of God in his government of the world. Surely, will the sinner say, it was for some valuable end that God at first pronounced punishment to attend the sins of his creatures, for *he does not afflict willingly, nor delight to grieve the children of men;* Lam. iii. 23. His design must be therefore one of these two things; either to correct and reform the sinners whom he punishes, and reduce them to their duty, in order to partake of his mercy; or else it must be to maintain a public monument and demonstration of his justice, and to support the authority of his law, and honour of his government, that he might deter other creatures from sinning against him: But when this world is come to its period, and his governing providence over it is finished, and all the means of grace are ended, the first end, *viz.* correction and reformation ceases: There is no more hope of reforming such sinners as these. And what further need can there be of the secondary design of punishment, *viz.* the demonstration of his justice in so terrible a manner to restrain others from sinning, when the state of our trial is ended, and all mankind are sent either to heaven or hell?

Answer I. I might here reply, by way of concession, that if there were no other intelligent creatures to be witnesses of these eternal demonstrations of God's holiness, his justice, and his hatred of sin; and if God himself was the only being who knew of

these eternal punishments, I acknowledge I cannot see sufficient reason for this endless duration of them; I cannot give any probable account why creatures who are never to be corrected and reformed, should be tormented for ever in secret; God perfectly knows his holiness and justice without such monuments of it; and since he has asserted this punishment, I think there must be some creatures to receive a moral influence from the knowledge of it.

Answer II. When there is a representation made of the punishment of the worshippers of the beast in *Rev.* xiv. 10, 11. that *they shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God which is poured out without mixture, and they shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, and the smoke of their torment ascendeth for ever and ever, it is in the presence of the holy angels as well as in the presence of the Lamb.* Angels and other innocent beings may improve such a sight to valuable purposes.

Objection the seventh, when we remember that Jesus Christ himself hath assured us that but few shall be saved, and that the broad way is full of sinners running down to destruction and death; if we suppose these punishments to be endless, some will be ready to say, What! shall the greatest part of God's creatures be made miserable for ever and ever? Is this consistent with the wisdom and goodness of the blesed God, to form such an immense multitude of souls dwelling in bodies, to make them for ever miserable? What will a God of goodness have to prove his goodness to his creatures, if far the greatest part of them are left in everlasting sorrows?

Answer. The far greatest part of the creation of God may be holy and happy still: For this world of ours, even all mankind, is a very small portion of God's immense dominions; and when the transactions of our earth, and God's present government of it shall be finished, he has a thousand other dominions among the planets and stars, which has been proved by the reason of men to a great degree of probability; and these he governs by righteous laws; and though he has not revealed much of them to us in this life, yet he has discovered something of this kind in his own word: He has acquainted us with his wise and righteous government over fallen angels, and what was their sin, *viz.* their pride and ambition, and what was their punishment for their first rebellion; *Jude*, verse 6. and this is done by the wisdom and mercy of God to affright men from sinning, while we behold how those fallen spirits are exposed and set forth as terrible examples for our warning. And why may not the everlasting punishment of sinners among the children of men be made a standing monument of God's justice, to deter many other worlds from offending him? Other worlds, I say, of unknown creatures, which perhaps may inhabit the planetary globes rolling round the same sun as our earth does; and their state of trial perhaps is not yet begun, or it may be half run out, and yet shall not be finished for some thousands of years?

Or perhaps there are other worlds of spirits, and invisible incorporeal, intelligent creatures in a state of trial, may persevere in glorious innocence and complete happiness, to the eternal praise of their Maker's goodness, and may yet be kept in their constant duty and obedience, by having always in their view the eternal punishment of wicked men. See this subject treated of at large in a book called, "The Strength and Weakness of Human Reason." See page 315.

The counsels of God are far above our reach, and his dominions and governments are unknown to us. What if the great God will have creatures in some of his territories, who in themselves are weak and ready to fall, and may be deterred from sin and apos-

tacy by such standing manifestations of his hatred of it, and his righteous vengeance against it? And since others have been monuments of warning to us, what if he please to make this world of ours, when he has taken the few righteous out of it to heaven; I say, what if he please to make the rest an everlasting spectacle of his justice and holiness to a hundred or a thousand other worlds, which may be utterly unknown to us? And he may, for this end, reveal his transactions with mankind to those worlds, though he has not revealed much of their affairs to us.

If I were to mention any other objection worthy of notice, I know of none but this, *viz.* "some learned men suppose it to have been the opinion of the primitive fathers," that souls departing from this world were sent into Hades, or the state of the dead, where the righteous rested in a state of peace and hope till the resurrection should bring them to heaven: And the most wicked amongst mankind went also to Hades, or this state of the dead, under a long and fearful expectation of the final punishments of hell: But that great multitudes who were of an indifferent character, and who were not so bad but they might be reclaimed, had another sort of trial in Hades, whither, they say, our Lord Jesus Christ at his death descended and preached the gospel to them, and many of them were recovered, and shall be hereafter raised to eternal life. The chief scripture whence they borrow this is; 1 *Pet.* iii. 19, 20. of which we have spoken before; and that at the great day of judgment the incorrigible sinners should be sent with the devils into the punishment of fire, which, though it may last for a shorter or longer time, yet should destroy both their bodies and their souls for ever. To this I answer,

Answer I. If this had been the doctrine of many ancient christians, yet unless they could bring plainer proofs of it from the word of God than one difficult and obscure text of St. Peter, there is no great reason for us to receive from them such traditions. The word of God is our only test of truth, and our instructor in matters of the invisible world.

Answer II. Though there might be a few of the early writers who seemed to incline to some of these opinions; yet this sense is drawn out from most of them by learned men with much difficulty, uncertainty and conjecture: And there are many others of them who make the punishments of hell as durable as the writers of later ages: Nor do they mention or allow of any such sort of purgatory for souls of an indifferent character as this objection pretends. Those who will look into their writings will find abundant evidence, that most of them talk of eternal punishment by fire in the very words and language of the New Testament, and in direct opposition to this doctrine of temporal punishments in hell. I shall cite but two writers, one of which is the very earliest of the fathers, an acquaintance of St. Paul, and that is Clemens the Roman, who in the eighth section of his second epistle says thus:

"Let us therefore repent whilst we are yet upon the earth: For we are as clay in the hand of the artificer. For as the potter, if he make a vessel, and it be distorted in his hands, or broken, again forms it anew; but if he hath gone so far as to throw it into the furnace of fire, he can no more bring any remedy to it: So we, whilst we are in this world, should repent with our whole heart for whatsoever evil we have done in the flesh, while we have yet the time of repentance, that we may be saved by the Lord. For after we shall have departed out of this world, we shall no longer be able either to confess our sins, or repent in the other." The English reader may find this in Archbishop Wake's Translation of the most Primitive Fathers.

Justin Martyr, who is also one of the most early writers, in the eighth section of his "First Apology," tells us "that Plato teaches that Rhadamanthus and Minos punished the unrighteous who came before them; and that we Christians say the same thing will be done, but it is by Christ; when their bodies are joined with their souls, and they shall be punished with eternal punishment, and not for the period of a thousand years only, as Plato said." This same writer also, in very many places of his works, talks of eternal punishment, and of punishment for an endless age, and eternal fire, with eternal sensation or pain.

Irenaeus also after him, as well as Ignatius and Polycarp before him, speak of this fire which is not to be quenched, and of death and punishment, not temporal, but eternal. So that it is really an imposition upon unlearned readers to pretend, that the doctrine which denies the eternity of the punishments of hell, was the common sense of the primitive fathers, though it is granted that Origen and some others might be of this opinion.

To conclude; since the word has expressly assured us, that these punishments of sinful men shall be eternal, it is not for us to hearken to any other doctrines, and neglect what God has said, nor is it fit for us to dispute the wisdom and justice of divine conduct, nor to impeach his goodness. *Let God be true, though every man be a liar;* Rom. iii. 4. let God be wise though every man be a fool; let God be just and righteous in all his ways, though man vainly murmur against him, and raise these noisy and feeble remonstrances against his judgments. *The counsel of the Lord shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure;* Rom. iii. 4. in the eternal manifestations of his justice as well as his grace. If there be any supposed inconsistency or cloud of difficulty remaining on his conduct, he will clear it up to the satisfaction of every rational mind one day, and will bring the conscience of every condemned sinner to acknowledge the equity of his proceedings: The whole creation shall then justify the final sentence of judgment on all the sons of men.

I cannot finish this awful argument better than the apostle finishes the same sort of subject in the ninth and eleventh chapters to the Romans. *O man, who art thou that repliest against God? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, hath endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath who have fitted themselves for destruction? And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he hath afore prepared unto glory?* chapter ix. 20, 22, 23. *O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge,* the justice and goodness *of God, how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, to whom be glory for ever and ever;*" chapter xi. 33—36. *Amen.*

SECTION III.

REFLECTIONS ON THE ETERNITY OF PUNISHMENT IN HELL.

As we have before drawn various inferences from the nature of those punishments that are prepared for sinners in the world to come, so there are other inferences and terrible reflections which may be derived from the duration or perpetuity of the torments of hell.

Reflection I. "What unspeakable anguish and torture doth this one circumstance add to every pain and sorrow of damned creatures, that it is everlasting and has no end?" What unknown twinges in the conscience doth this thought give to the gnawing of the cruel worm, *viz.* that it is *a worm that never dies?* What inconceivable force and sting of torment does this add to the fire of God's indignation in hell, that it is *a fire which shall never be quenched?* When one year of torment and sorrow is ended, or one thousand years are come to their period, the case of sinners is still much the same, the vengeance remains still as heavy as ever, and seems as far off from its end. This dreadful price, which the justice of God demands for the reparation of our offences against his law and his authority, is a price which creatnres can never pay, for it is infinite; and therefore when a finite creature begins to make payment thereof with his own sufferings, these sufferings must be everlasting.

It is evident, that one wilful sin is sufficient to sink creatures under the indignation of a God for six thousand years: I call the angels who sinned for witnesses to this truth: They were formed in holiness and in glory before the creation of the lower world, and probably they sinned and fell before this creation too; and they are yet imprisoned and confined under perpetual chains of darkness, as the word of God tells us, and *reserved to everlasting punishment at the judgment of the great day.* And if thou, O sinner, among the sons of men, if thou diest in an unregenerate, unholy, and unpardoned state, the sins of thy whole life are charged upon thee, and thou art daily *treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath;* Rom. ii. 5. and *thou shalt not escape from this prison till thou hast paid the utmost farthing;* Matt. v. 26.

If one sin deserves all this misery which has been described, what a dreadful reckoning will the sins of thy whole life come to, when every command of God which thou hast broken shall appear and demand reparation for its injured honour? Remember, O sinner, obstinate and rebellious, remember thou hast to do with a great and dreadful God, who has all thy "iniquities ever before his eyes;" Isaiah lvi. 5. *Behold they are written before me, and I will recompense, saith the Lord, their iniquity into their bosom.* He is a God that will never forget any of thy crimes. Amos viii. 7. *The Lord hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, surely I will never forget any of their works.* Though thou hast lost and forgot them, he will bring them again into thy conscience with a terrible remembrance; and when God comes forth in a way of vengeance, *every transgression and disobedience shall receive a just recompence of reward;* Heb. ii. 2. *Vengeance belongeth unto me, saith the Lord;* chapter x. 30. *He that spared not his own Son,* when *he laid on him the iniquity of us all,* Rom. viii. 25. will never spare thee who art the personal and criminal transgressor. Eternal recompences are due to the demands of justice, and he will punish till full payment is made, equal to the evil of sin, that is to all everlasting.

Reflection II. "What infinite and eternal concerns hang upon the short and slender thread of human life?" An eternal heaven or an eternal hell depend on our good or ill behaviour in this short and mortal state. While life remains, the sinner's hope remains; he abides on the stage of action, and this is the state of trial for eternity: But as soon as the thread of life is broken, immediately ensues endless joy or endless sorrow. What a poor fleeting vapour, what a thin and frail bubble is this feeble and uncertain thing which we call life? And yet what matters of immense importance depend upon it? This present life is a prize put into our hands, for it is the only time given us to obtain deliverance and escape from eternal death: Life in this view, as mere a bubble and vapour as it

is, carries in it something of infinite and everlasting moment: But alas! how wretchedly does foolish and sinful mankind trifle and squander it away amidst a thousand vanities and impertinencies, or saunter it out in sloth and laziness, with an utter disregard of the important eternity that depends upon it? What multitudes are there that waste the golden hours of grace, and the seasons of hope, in procuring to themselves, by their own wilful iniquities, a length of damnation and everlasting despair?

While we dwell here in the midst of the means of mercy and salvation, there is hope that our sinful souls may be healed of that disease which is breeding the ever-gnawing worm within us. We may prevent the fuel of divine wrath from kindling into a flame which cannot be quenched: But when once the clock of life has gone through its appointed spaces, and the last hour strikes, whether it be three or five, whether at twelve at noon, or at midnight, all hope is for ever gone; we are plunged into the regions of death, despondency, and darkness, and nothing remains but the actual torture of the worm of conscience to seize on us, and the fire of divine anger actually breaks out, which *shall burn to the lowest hell.* O could we but behold ourselves in the glass of wisdom, while we are yet standing upon the slippery edge of this burning precipice, and playing with painted bubbles there, or in warm pursuit of a flying shining feather along the brink of this burning torrent, what fools and madmen should we appear to be even in our own eyes! And yet we go on to practise this folly, this madness, day after day, in spite of all the warnings of God and man, till at last our foot slips in some dreadful moment, and we vanish out of the sight of our companions, and are lost for ever.

Reflection III. If the miseries of hell are eternal "how unreasonable a thing is it ever to suffer the loss of any possessions or joys which are temporal and perishing to come into competition with them?" Surely there is nothing that belongs to time that should tempt us to run the risk of the sorrows of eternity, nor allure us to commit one sin against God, which is the fatal spring of such sorrows! Stand still, O sinner, and hearken to the voice of wisdom. Do the pleasures of sense, or the gaieties of sight, or the wealth or grandeurs of this life, allure thee to make thy way boldly through any means toward the possession of them, think with thyself, is it by offending this great and dreadful God? And wilt thou dare to take one step towards these dangerous and deceitful vanities, and risk thy immortal welfare in the pursuit? What a foolish bargain wilt thou make to *gain the whole world* of short-lived perishing trifles, *and to lose thy soul* in endless perdition? *Mark* viii. 36. Dare any of us venture an eternal state of torment to gain the flattering and delusive joy of a short hour, or a winter's day?

What are all the gratifications of flesh and sense? What are all the swelling titles of honour amongst men? What are all the treasures of this perishing world? How short is their duration, and how short is thy possession of them? All earthly felicities perish in the using, and are no sooner enjoyed but are quickly lost again, or expire in the enjoyment: But if the ruin of a soul, and a lost heaven, be the price of them, how mad is the purchase, and how wretched is the purchaser?

Reflection IV. "How patiently should we bear all the labours and fatigues, the pains and miseries of this mortal life, when we have any hope of our deliverance from the pains and sorrows of immortality?" As for our maladies and sorrows here on earth, blessed be God they are not eternal: There are some intervals to relieve, and there is some period to finish them. When we ask a friend who is sick and in pain, "how fare you? I am in

pain now, says he, but I hope I shall be easy anon: I am sick to-day, but I trust I shall be in health to-morrow." This is a sweet mitigation of the present uneasiness, and gives relief to the patient. But how dreadful and piercing would these accents be, if we should hear our friend make this answer to us, "I am all over in extreme pain and anguish, and I shall never, never be eased of it: I lie under exquisite torment of the flesh, and horror in my soul, and I shall for ever feel this horror and this torment." Such is the case of the damned sinners in hell, and therefore their agonies are intolerable.

But if you have any comfortable prospect of the pardon of sin, and a well-grounded hope of eternal salvation through the blood of Christ, and by the rules and promises of the gospel, all the temporal toils and plagues that can possibly stand between us and heaven should be despised and disregarded by us, and we should learn to triumph over them with the victorious songs of thankfulness and praise. Blessed be the name of our God, *though he has smitten us sorely, yet he has not given us over to everlasting death.*

Let our thoughts ascend to the heavenly regions, and let us ask those who are arrived thither out of the land of temptation and conflict, out of these tabernacles of sin and sorrow; let us ask them, what gave them so divine a courage and so firm a patience in the midst of all their trials? With one voice they will all make answer, it was the view of our deliverance from an eternal hell, and the hopes of obtaining salvation by Christ Jesus with eternal glory; it is this that supported us under every burden, and bore us on with a spirit of faith and victory through every hardship on earth. It was for this we laboured, and suffered, and counted not life, nor any of the blessings of it dear to us, nor any of the sorrows of it intolerable, that we might escape the everlasting sorrows of a future state, and enjoy the blessings of life eternal. And, O may every one of us *be the followers of those who through this faith and patience have obtained the promised felicity;* Heb. vi. 13. May we also make our way, by the same motives, through the floods and the fires of affliction and distress, to reach this everlasting heaven, and to escape everlasting burnings?

In order to confirm our patience, and to animate our zeal, let us survey the blessed example of St. Paul, who was reproached, who was buffeted, who was persecuted with stones, and whips, and scourges, and bore a thousand indignities, who was assaulted with endless strokes of injury and violence, and yet rejoiced in the midst of all his sufferings in the view of his eternal hope. The spirit of faith in the midst of all his sufferings taught him to sing this divine song, *Our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, are working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;* 2 Cor. iv. 17. *The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed;* Rom. viii. 18. Nor are they worthy to be compared with that exceeding and eternal weight of vengeance, from which we are delivered by faith and patient obedience to the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection V. "If the miseries of hell are eternal, we can never have our deliverance from them made too secure." If the danger of any mischief, to which we might be exposed, were but slight, and the duration of it short, there might be possibly some excuse for our delay to escape it: But when it is total and irrevocable ruin to which we are liable every moment while we continue in a state of sin, we should fly with all the wings of our souls, and never be at ease or quiet till we are got without the reach of danger, and settled in a place of safety, or on the rock of our salvation.

O could we but perceive a thousandth part of the horror that is contained in an eternal

hell, an eternal banishment from the face and favour of God, and the eternal impressions of his anger, we should never give ourselves rest one moment, till we had returned to God by a sincere repentance, and were reconciled to him that made us; till we *fled for refuge* to the blood of Jesus, and to his sanctifying grace, which is the only *hope that is set before us.* We should never give ourselves leave to lie down, or awake in quiet, while we were destitute of a saving interest in the salvation of Christ, and had attained to some clear evidence of it, and a well-grounded hope.

Have we not sometimes felt the worm of conscience begin to gnaw within us, and to prey upon our spirits after the commission of some sin? And shall we not apply ourselves with all holy speed to the divine physician who can kill this gnawing worm within us, and can heal those sinful maladies that are breeding it? Have we not sometimes felt the threatenings of the wrath of God in his law, like a fire in our bones? With what infinite desire then, and what restless vehemence should we fly to the blood of Jesus our great sacrifice, which alone can quench the fiery indignation of God, and prevent it from growing up to an everlasting flame!

Had we upon our spirits such a sense of the terrors of the Lord in hell, as his threatenings represent, we should never be satisfied with such cold doubtful hopes of our deliverance from them, as thousands of nominal christians are contented with; but we should make every needful and critical enquiry, whether our repentance were sincere, whether our faith in Christ were unfeigned, whether our hopes had a solid foundation in the divine promise: We should search every power of our souls, and examine our hearts through every corner, whether sin be mortified there, whether the christian virtues are formed within us, and the divine image is begun to be stamped upon our minds: We should be restless and impatient in our inward searches, whether we are made new creatures, whether we are born of God and become his children, and are secured by his gospel from this everlasting vengeance. The degree and the infinite duration of this misery should appoint the proportion of our zeal and solicitude to escape it.

A man who sees or feels his own house on fire under him, does not continue upon his bed of sloth, or sit amusing himself among the ornaments of his chamber, till the flames have broke through and seized him: But with huge outcries he seeks for help, and flies in haste for his life wheresoever he finds a way. Such should be the language, and such the activity of sinful creatures, to escape the wrath to come; and such will be the outcries of sinners when they are thoroughly awakened: This language of every place, and of every hour will then be awakened, *What shall I do to be saved?* Whither shall I fly for refuge? O blessed Jesus, receive me into thy protection, and be thou my deliverer.

Give me leave to repeat this sort of expostulation with lingering and delaying sinners, or with drowsy and formal christians. If you would set yourselves often in the blaze of these everlasting burnings, you would never satisfy yourselves with such cold faint wishes, such lazy endeavours, such languid efforts of faith and repentance to escape this fiery indignation that shall never be quenched: Nor would you content yourselves with dark and doubtful evidences of your interest in the love of God, and the grace of our Lord Jesus; but you would be day and night busy with your own hearts in the most intimate and careful search after converting grace and living christianity: You would never be at rest till you felt the new nature working with power and bright evidence within you, that you might be able to say, "We know there is no condemnation belongs to us, but that *we are passed from death unto life.*"

Let us proceed upon this subject, turning the discourse from ourselves to our friends, and say, with what fervour of love, with what holy zeal and compassion should we labour to save our friends and all that are dear to us from this eternal destruction? What words of fiery terror shall we choose to awaken those who slumber on the edge of endless burnings? What language of kind and tender passion shall we choose to reach their hearts? What phrases of melting pity to hasten their escape from this precipice of burning ruin, or to *pluck them as brands out of the fire* before it becomes unquenchable? *Knowing these terrors of the Lord*, with what vehemence of zeal should we try to *persuade men*, our fellow-mortals, that they would not venture into the midst of these miseries, and beseech them in the name of Christ, *to be reconciled to God!* This was the practice, and these the motives of the great apostle, as he describes them at the latter end of the fifth chapter in his second epistle to the Corinthians, verses 11—21.

Oh! with what force of ardent and active compassion should ministers preach both the curses of the law, and the grace of the blessed gospel to perishing sinners, and make haste to rescue their souls from this everlasting vengeance? With what warm and solicitous zeal should they lay hold of those poor thoughtless wretches who are madly indulging their lusts and follies, and thereby preparing themselves to become fit fuel for this eternal fire? They are forming themselves by their iniquities to become vessels of this everlasting indignation: Let us seize them by some kind and constraining words of love, some outcries of compassion and fear, lest they rush into those flames which will never be quenched: Perhaps when they are summoned away from us by the stroke of death, they may leave us in most uncomfortable sorrows for our neglect, while they are suffering the long endless punishment due to their own iniquities.

Reflection VI. "How unreasonable a thing is it for us ministers, who are charged and intrusted with the whole counsel of God for the salvation of men, to avoid the mention of these his eternal terrors in our sermons, and in our addresses to mortal creatures;" creatures who are daily preparing themselves for them by their sins, and are ready to plunge into the midst of them? Has not our blessed Saviour made frequent mention of them in his gospel, and set them in their dreadful array before his hearers? Has he not expressed them in their strongest terms, and spread them in their most frightful colours, and set them in their full and everlasting extent, before the sinners which attended his ministry? And did he ever give any hint that they should be understood in a milder sense? Have not the apostles followed their Lord in the same dreadful display of the sharp and everduring punishments of hell? And have they taught us to qualify these terrors by gentler interpretations of them? And have not such kind of discourses been abundantly blessed in the providence of God, both in ancient and later ages, to awaken and save multitudes of the souls of men?

How many holy and happy spirits are now rejoicing before God, and before the throne of his love, and encompassed with all the joys of immortality, who owe the beginnings of their repentance, and the first turn of their souls towards faith and salvation to such words of terror as these? How many of the saints on high have been first awakened from their deadly sleep in sin by the ministrations of this eternal vengeance of God? How many have been frighted out of their indolence at first by the discovery of these everlasting horrors of conscience and agonies of soul? The dread of the worm that never dies has affrighted their consciences from a course of sin: The fiery indignation which shall never be quenched has flashed in their bosoms from the lips of the preacher, and has set them

all over trembling, and filled all their inward powers with dismay and anguish: Their tongue has broke into loud and earnest enquiries, *Who shall deliver me* from this eternal death? How shall I escape this everlasting wrath to come? And the Spirit of God by degrees has led them to Jesus, and his atoning blood, his gospel, his righteousness and his converting grace, as the only way of deliverance and salvation.

How unreasonable a thing is it for ministers in their preaching to soften these terrors of the Lord, to cut short these endless horrors and anguish, and to mitigate the miseries of hell and damnation, since even all that length and eternity in which Christ and his apostles preached these terrors, have not been sufficient to reclaim mankind from their iniquities; but multitudes of them, in the face of all these threatenings, still persist in *the broad way* to destruction and death?

Can we possibly do any honour to the ministry of our blessed Lord, or is there any real service done to the souls of men by our fond and vain reasonings to shorten these sorrows, and put a period to these threatened torments? Will the blessed Jesus, when he sits on the throne of judgment, give us thanks for running counter to the language of his own ministry, and for daring to contradict his denounced vengeance?

By the various expressions and representations of this matter in scripture, in such solemn and dreadful language, must I not suppose that the blessed God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, designed and intended that mankind should believe the pains and punishments of hell will be eternal? Can I then be censured for endeavouring to establish and promote the awful doctrine which both God the Father and his Son intended should be believed, and by which they designed to guard both the law and the gospel? A doctrine which was left on record to deter sinners from the paths of sin and destruction, and to awaken the souls and consciences of men to repentance? On the other hand, can those teachers be approved of God or good men, whose evident design is to lead the world to disbelieve this solemn and terrible warning of the great God?

Let us proceed in these enquiries, and address ourselves to those wicked and miserable creatures, who are actually suffering this divine vengeance. Let us ask them, how they approve of this sort of preaching which withholds from the eyes and ears, and consciences of men, the most dreadful circumstance of these horrors? Will any of the damned wretches of hell thank us for hiding so dreadful a part of these miseries from them? Will they bless us for lessening the threatened curses and indignation of a God? "No, says the condemned wretch, those preachers are worthy of my curses and not my thanks, who abated these *terrors of the Lord*, and shortened his threatened punishment; for they persuaded me to hope there would be an end of my misery, and thereby tempted me to venture upon those sins which I should have renounced with abomination, had I believed the words of God, and these everlasting torments. O cursed and cruel preachers, who by softening and curtailing the sentence of eternal misery, gave a sort of licence to my wickedness, and broke one of the strongest bars that restrained me from sinning! 'Tis by this sort of flattery they paved my way down to hell, and have brought me into this prison, this eternal anguish whence there is no release."*

* Some of the ancients have called those preachers, who shorten the pains of hell the merciful or compassionate doctors: And Doctor Thomas Burnet calls those merciless or uncompassionate, who preach the eternity of it: But I think it will appear one day, that those are truly the compassionate writers and teachers, who most effectually affright and prevent men from sin and damnation; and those who have given wicked men hope of their release from hell, will be in danger of being charged with smoothing their way to this misery, by softening the terrors of it.

Say, ye who preach that the gates of hell shall one day be opened to let out the prisoners, ye who tell sinners there is a time of release for them, say, do ye expect to fright them out of their sins by lessening their fear of God and his wrath to come? Do ye hope to bring obstinate and impenitent rebels to a more speedy remorse for sin, and to begin a life of holiness, by persuading them that these terrors of God shall have an end? Can ye imagine that such vain tidings, such soothing flattery will ever melt them to repentance and love, when all the grace of the gospel mingled with the blood and tears of the Son of God will not do it? Would not this manner of preaching rather encourage them to run on still in their rebellions, and make them more regardless of their highest interest? Would it not tempt them to give a loose to their vilest inclinations, and all the flagrant and abominable enormities of their own heart, when they shall be told that these punishments, which the Bible calls everlasting, shall one day come to an end?

Besides, I believe it has been observed in every age, that the fears of this worm which never dies, and this eternal fire which shall never be quenched, have been made abundantly useful, in the providence of God, to lay a powerful restraint on the unruly vices of some sinners, who have never been awakened and drawn into saving penitence, or reclaimed to a life of sincere holiness. And if the restraint of this terror were taken away, how much more would all iniquity abound among those who have no inward principle of goodness? Let us proceed then to preach the same terror which the blessed Jesus thought not unworthy of his ministry; and may the providence and the grace of God give success to our labours, both for the restraining the extravagant vices of the wicked, for the saving conversion of many sinners, and for a guard and restraint to the young and wavering christians.*

Notwithstanding all the express language of scripture on our side of the question, and all our arguments drawn from it, yet there are some of the reasoners and the *disputers of this world*, who will still suppose that it is more for the honour of God, and for the glory of our blessed Saviour, for ministers to dwell always upon the promises of the new covenant, and the riches of the grace of Christ, and the overflowing measures of the love of God, in order to save sinful men. "Surely, say they, preachers have tried long enough what the words of terror will do; let us now allure sinful men to be reconciled to God by a ministry of universal love and grace; and let us see whether the boundless compassions of a God, in putting a final period to the miseries of his guilty creatures after a certain number of years, will not draw sinners with a sweeter violence to the love and obedience of their Maker, than all this doctrine of severity and terror." In the first place I answer,

Answer. I. That surely Jesus himself, who is the prime minister of his Father's kingdom, and the divinest messenger of his love, knew better than we do how to pay the

* The late Doctor Thomas Burnet, in his Latin Treatise of the "State of the Dead, and those who rise again," opposes the doctrine of the eternity of future punishments, and shews who of the ancient fathers seems to be of the same opinion with him: But he tells us, that these ancient fathers, when they treated of this subject, often gave the same advice to others, which he himself gives in these words. "Whatsoever you determine within yourself and in your own breast, concerning these punishments, whether they are eternal or no, yet you ought to use the common doctrine and the common language when you preach or speak to the people, especially those of the lower rank, who are ready to run headlong into vice, and are to be restrained from evil only by the fear of punishment: And even among good christians there are infants to be nourished with milk; nor is their diet to be rashly changed, lest through intemperance they fall into diseases.

And he adds in the margin, "Whosoever shall translate these sentiments into our mother tongue, I shall think it was done with an evil design and to bad purpose." So that if this were a true doctrine, yet the learned author agrees, that neither the holy writers of the Bible, nor the fathers, think it proper that the bulk of the people should know it. But if it should not be translated, I would ask, why did the author write it and leave it to be published? Did he suppose all men and boys, who understood Latin, to be sufficiently guarded against the abuse of such an opinion?

highest honour to his heavenly Father, and to display his own grace. Surely he was well acquainted with the best way to begin with sinners in order to their reconciliation to God, and knew also the most effectual avenues to the consciences of sinful creatures, incomparably beyond what any of us can pretend to. Had he not as tender a sense of the honour of his Father's mercy, as warm a zeal for the glory of his own grace and gospel, and as wise and melting a compassion for the souls of men as the best of us can boast of? And yet he thought it proper to lay the foundation of his own, and his apostles' ministrations of grace, in this language of terror, in these threatenings of eternal punishment. And in the course of his providence throughout all ages he has, in some measure, made this doctrine successful to recover souls from the snares of the devil, and to enlarge his own heavenly kingdom. But I answer further,

Answer II. It must be granted that the tempers of men are various, and it is possible that some may be of so ingenuous and refined a disposition, that the words of love and grace, without any terror, might reach their hearts, and through the influences of heaven, touch them effectually: But as for the bulk of mankind, while they continue in their sins, daily experience convinceth us, that they are best awakened by the terrors of the Lord, by a representation of the gnawing *worm which never dies, and the fire which shall not be quenched.* I never knew but one person in the whole course of my ministry who acknowledged, that the first motions of religion in his own heart arose from a sense of the goodness of God, and that he was gently and sweetly led at first to this enquiry, *What shall I render to the Lord who hath dealt so bountifully with me?* Psalm cxvi. 12. But I think all besides, who have come within my notice, have rather been first awakened by the passion of fear to *fly from the wrath to come.*

If therefore we will practise according to the example of Jesus, the greatest and the wisest prophet of his church, and his holy apostles, and the best of preachers in all ages who have followed him; if we would obey the dictates of long experience, and our best observations on the methods of converting grace, I think we must proceed to denounce these eternal terrors of the Lord against the transgressors of his law and the despisers of his gospel. This seems to be the appointed and most effectual way to rouse their consciences to seek a deliverance from the curses of the law, which carry in them everlasting punishment. This appears to be the first spring of religion in sinful men, and the first motive to receive the glad tidings of salvation which are displayed in the New Testament. This spurs on their passions to escape the vengeance of God, by flying to his gospel, where there is rich and abundant grace to encourage the hope of rebellious creatures in their returns to God by Jesus Christ, the Saviour. To Jesus, who is the awful messenger of his Father's terrors, and the prime minister of his love, be glory and honour to everlasting ages. *Amen.*

POSTSCRIPT.

Whereas it hath pleased God for these two years past to cut me off from the delightful work of my study, and for the greatest part of the time to withhold me from all public service in my station by several weaknesses of nature; and whereas I had many writings lying by me which were quite finished and corrected for the press, my friends might naturally expect that those pieces which were most nearly, or quite finished and revised, would first appear in the world, because it is much easier to correct three sheets in a week from the press, than it is in as many months to revise or to finish any imperfect manuscript.

I think proper therefore here to acquaint them, that as fast as the providence of God shall restore my health and strength, I shall endeavour to hasten the finishing of such as are yet imperfect: Some of which perhaps the public may more earnestly expect.

Stoke-Newington,
Feb. 21. 1744-5.

THE STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS

OF

HUMAN REASON:

OR, THE

IMPORTANT QUESTION

ABOUT

THE SUFFICIENCY OF REASON

TO CONDUCT MANKIND TO

RELIGION AND FUTURE HAPPINESS,

ARGUED BETWEEN AN

INQUIRING DEIST AND A CHRISTIAN DIVINE:

AND THE DEBATE COMPROMISED AND DETERMINED TO THE SATISFACTION OF BOTH,

BY AN IMPARTIAL MODERATOR.

THE PREFACE.

In free and familiar conferences it is never required that such a just accuracy of sentiment or language should be observed, or that men should be confined to such exactness of method, as in a set and studied treatise on any appointed theme. Occasional incidents frequently arise, and turn the conversation aside into an unexpected channel; or sometimes perhaps we recal the same subject, and the same sense may be repeated again. And in the warmth of discourse some freedoms of thought and expression may break out, which stand in need of the candour of those that hear them, and it is ever allowed in such cases. Let it be noted also, that when persons of different characters are introduced in a free discourse, the narrator is not bound to defend all that one or any of the parties present happen to utter: He will not pretend to support every thing that *Pithander* urges in vindication of the insufficiency of human reason in matters of religion: nor dares he venture to make all the concessions on the side of its sufficiency, nor advance all the suppositions that *Sophronius* the moderator hath done in this dispute. But, upon the whole, if there be any thing suggested in these conferences which may occasion *Logisto* and his companions, who are under temptations to infidelity, to bethink themselves a little; if it may awaken any of them so far as to raise some doubts about the sufficiency of their boasted reason, and lead them to see and confess the necessity of divine revelation, in order to reform the world, and to restore mankind to true religion and the favour of God, the writer hath attained his chief design, and shall rejoice in the success.

There is no objection which the author has found in any public writing raised against this book, but such as are already expressly and in plain language both proposed by *Logisto*, and answered by *Pithander* or *Sophronius*. And he intreats such opponents to read the book over before they write against it, before they treat it with insult, and pronounce victory and triumph on their own side. The chief objection which the author has heard of, that hath been raised in conversation against these conferences is, that the deist does not argue so strenuously as he might have done, nor pursue his cause with sufficient vigour and constancy; but that he seems to be too soon and too easily convinced by the reasoning of his antagonist or the moderator, in several of the subjects of controversy between them; whereas our modern infidels would have scorned to have dropped the argument, or yielded up the cause without more contest. To this the author asks leave to reply, that if he had cited the books whence he drew *Logisto*'s argument, the objectors, perhaps, would think better of them; for they are not borrowed from the meanest writers. Nor has he ever represented *Logisto* falling under conviction, but where he thinks the arguments of *Pithander* or *Sophronius* carry sufficient weight and convincing power with them: He confesses, indeed, that if he had drawn the teazing saw of controversy further, and prolonged a wrangling dialogue beyond this point, perhaps it

would set the writers on that side in a juster view, agreeable to their own practice; but still it would have been mere cavilling instead of disputing, it would have rendered the reading tiresome, and have swelled the volume too much. Besides, the character of *Logisto* is an enquiring deist, not a resolved and obstinate unbeliever; and if he had been represented and supported in all the windings and turnings of a sophistical caviller, who avoids the light, and who would never be satisfied, this would have thrown *Logisto* quite out of his character. However, if any of the modern disbelievers of revelation complain that the author has represented them as too fair disputants, as feeling the force of an argument too soon, and as yielding to just conviction beyond what they are in reality, he hopes he may obtain an easy pardon for this sort of injury, from gentlemen who make such high pretences to a sincere search after truth, and a ready submission to the power of reason. As for any improvements that are made in this second edition, they chiefly consist in some additional force given to particular arguments, some farther illustrations of what might appear less evident, and other small corrections interspersed through the whole work.

THE

STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS

OF

HUMAN REASON ARGUED.

IN FOUR CONFERENCES.

FIRST CONFERENCE.

THE declining sun had abated the heat of the day, when *Sophronius* took his customary walk through the fields which bordered on his own estate. Having roved onward, in meditation, to a greater distance than he first designed, it came into his thoughts that he had not paid a visit for two months before to his neighbour *Logisto:* So he called in at his door, to pass away an hour with him in friendly discourse, as they were sometimes wont to do, upon any profitable theme that might offer in the vast and unlimited range of religion or learning.

Logisto was a young gentleman of much larger circumstances; and as he had a sprightly genius, so he had taken some care to cultivate it, and was a great admirer of human reason. He had often of late fallen into company with some of our modern infidels, and for want of due caution, and better acquaintance with the true grounds of christianity, he had unhappily imbibed too many of their opinions. Yet the man had a candid soul, and seemed to be sincerely desirous of truth: He was ever inquiring after some further evidences of the christian doctrine, and as heartily attentive to the objections that were made against it. He had now seen somewhat more than thirty years of life, and he thought it was high time to settle his belief and his practice in matters of religion, on a foundation that might justify his conduct to his own conscience, and to God his judge. He was willing to receive an argument from the lips of laity or clergy, and could converse freely with a christian minister, in hopes to borrow light and instruction from him: Nor would he treat that rank of men with those disdainful airs, which are become so fashionable among the pretenders to infidelity. *Logisto* had appointed to spend that very evening in a set conference with *Pithander*, the rector of the parish where he dwelt, upon that important point of controversy, "Whether human reason were sufficient to guide and conduct mankind to future happiness?"

Pithander was a man in years, but of vigorous parts, nor yet declining in his reasoning powers: A person of a grave and manly deportment, and a pious life, becoming his character: He was a warm advocate for the christian faith: He preached the gospel with zeal and diligence, to the edification of his flock, and had lately read some writings of his excellent diocesan, drawn up in an epistolary way, upon the subject of the present designed debate, wherein the insufficiency of human reason, in matters of religion, was strongly maintained. He publicly recommended these pastoral letters to the diligent and serious perusal of all his parish; for he was charmed with these writings, as the best

vindication of our holy religion, which he had ever met with in so few pages, and highly valued it as a noble defence of christianity, worthy of a christian bishop.

Pithander had just entered *Logisto*'s house, in order to fulfil their mutual appointment, and they were gone down to an elegant summer-house at the lower end of the garden, before *Sophronius* knocked at the gate. When he was admitted, he chose to take a turn on the grass-plot, while the servant went to give notice to his master. *Logisto* espied him afar off; for he was of a tall and comely stature, which, together with his grizzled hair, had rendered his person more distinguished and conspicuous. "See here, saith he to *Pithander*, a proper moderator for our intended debate, if you please to allow *Sophronius* to bear a part in the conversation of the evening." "I have some knowledge of him, replied *Pithander;* he is a gentleman of good reading, and generally a pretty fair reasoner: Were it not for one thing, I should like him very well for a moderator; for I think he is in the main an honest man: But he indulges such a latitude of thought on some subjects, that I expect he will too easily allow reason to be a sufficient guide to lead heathens to heaven; for he not only speaks favourably of the presbyterians, but I myself once heard him say, that he believes even the papists and the quakers may have some good things among them, and some good men too."

"Good sir, said *Logisto*, when shall we have done with all these party distinctions, and this narrowness of spirit? Must charity be always a dangerous thing? If you know *Sophronius*, you know a man of ingenuity and honour; he hath a certain sagacity with him, whereby he spies the force of an argument at once; and knows the vast difference there is betwixt disputing and cavilling: He can tell you immediately where an objection pinches hardest, and is so honest as to feel and confess it, even when it is urged against his own opinions. He goes generally to church, and I take him to be a very sincere believer in his Bible; and upon this account, my good friend, I have more reason to say, he is unfit for a moderator in our present dispute, than you can have to think him so, on account of his moderation and his generous charity. I am well assured that he is no bigot, that he never runs into any extremes, nor follows any opinion for the sake of party: I think we may safely take him for a moderator between us; and I shall be glad to have him not only shew us what he observes of strength or weakness in each of our arguments, but shall request his final sentiments on the theme of our controversy."

Upon this, *Pithander* soon agreed to the proposal: "Let him then, said he, hear our present debates, if you please, and pronounce at last on the subject."

By this time *Logisto*'s servant had got down to the summer-house, and having told his master of his new-come guest, he was ordered immediately to wait on him down the long myrtle walk, and let him know how much his company was desired.

When they had paid mutual salutations, *Logisto* informed *Sophronius* of the intent of their meeting, of the subject of their intended conference, and of the office to which they had both appointed him; and they joined to intreat his consent. After a few becoming excuses, *Sophronius* chose rather to obey their order, than to disappoint the design of the evening: And see, said he, the sun grows low, therefore let your debate commence. Upon this *Logisto* began:

Logisto. My business, *Pithander*, is to prove, that *human reason, without any revelation from heaven, is sufficient to guide and conduct mankind in a way of religion, to the favour of God, and future blessedness.* Now that we may understand one another per-

fectly, and keep up the same ideas of the terms we use throughout the whole dispute, I will try first whether we cannot settle the sense of them to our mutual satisfaction.

Pithander. Then let us hear, sir, your explication of the terms.

Logisto. I question whether I can do it better than a late writer on this subject has done: I will make use of his words, therefore, which are contained in the first page of his book: I have just bought it: Here it lies by me in the summer-house, and I will read the lines to you, sir, with a very little alteration. "By reason, I understand that faculty or power of the mind, by which men discern and judge of right and wrong, of good and evil, of truth and error, and the like. By matters of religion, I understand not merely the practices of piety toward God, but of virtue and sobriety with regard to our neighbours and ourselves, and in general all those things which men are accountable for to the Maker and Governor of the universe; and thereby render themselves the proper objects of reward or punishment. By guidance and conduct in matters of religion, I understand an ability or capacity, if carefully and faithfully exercised, to discover what are these duties of piety and virtue, or what it is which man, in reason and equity, is accountable for, and which will render him the proper object of divine favour or displeasure; and likewise a capacity to discover such motives to enforce the practice of these duties, as will be a balance to all those temptations which the present constitution of things unavoidably subjects him to. And by a sufficiency to guide and conduct a man in matters of religion, I understand such a capacity or power in man, when duly exercised, as is sufficient to answer these purposes without any thing superadded; and which will render him, in justice and equity, inexcusable if he miscarries." Give me leave to add this one thing, that by mentioning future blessedness in my state of the question, you see I intend to declare my profession of the immortality of the soul, and a state of rewards and punishments to be dispensed in the other world, by God the righteous Governor and the Judge of all, according to our behaviour in the present state. Well, *Pithander*, do you agree to this account of the terms we shall use in this dispute?

Pithander. Yes, I think I do, sir; for I see nothing necessary to be objected against it at present.

Logisto. Then, since we have settled the meaning of the question, I will now enter upon the argument, and endeavour to prove the sufficiency of human reason to guide and conduct men to happiness in a way of religion, though they have no revelation.

Pithander. I think, sir, it will be necessary for us still to enquire, and agree yet more particularly, how far this idea of religion reaches, what are the chief articles it comprehends; that is, what are those truths which are necessary to be known and believed, upon which these duties depend; and what are those duties which are necessary to be practised, to obtain the favour of God and happiness in another world?

Logisto. I perfectly approve of your proposal, sir; and when we have settled these articles, let us see first, whether reason be not sufficient to guide or instruct us in the knowledge of them all; and afterward we will debate, whether the same reason cannot by them conduct us to heaven; that is, whether reason has not a sufficient natural power, by proper motives, to enforce the practice of the duties which it teaches us, and bring us thereby to happiness. These are the two things which I mean by guiding and conducting.

Pithander. I consent to this method, sir; and since perhaps you and I shall hardly agree at once upon all the articles of this necessary religion, I dare venture to propose

that *Sophronius* may be desired to reckon them up, as an impartial person between us. I hope he will not fail to do justice in this part of the argument.

Logisto. Pray, *Sophronius*, please to take this trouble upon you: It will be no difficult matter for you, who are so well acquainted with these disputes, to tell us at so short a warning, what mere reason makes necessary for man to believe and practise, if ever he would hope to obtain the favour of God.

Sophronius. Since you both request it, gentlemen, I comply, and venture to give my thoughts in this matter; and I hope I shall mention only such articles as you will both assent to the necessity of them, and such as I hope also you will both believe to be sufficient, where there is no divine revelation. Doubtless, man *must* know and *believe*, in the first place, *that there is a God*, and that *this God is but one;* for God is too *jealous* of his honour and his dignity, and too much concerned in this important point, to lavish out happiness and his heavenly favours on any person who *makes other gods* to become his rivals, or who exalts a creature, or a mere chimera, into the throne of God. He must believe also, that God is a being of perfect wisdom, power, and goodness, and that he is the righteous Governor of the world. Man must also know, that he himself is a creature of God, furnished with a faculty of understanding to perceive the general difference between good and evil, in the most important instances of it; and endowed with a will, which is a power to choose or to refuse the evil or the good: That he is obliged to exert these powers or faculties in a right manner, both toward God and toward himself, as well as his neighbour. I do not insist upon it, that he must know those propositions explicitly, and in a philosophical manner; but he must have some sort of consciousness of his own natural powers, to know and distinguish, to choose or to refuse good or evil, and must be sensible of his obligations to enquire and practise what is good, and to avoid what is evil.

As for the duties that relate to God, man is obliged *to worship him* with reverence, *to honour him* in his heart and life, on the account of his wisdom and power manifested in the world; *to fear his majesty, to love him,* and *hope in his goodness, to give him thanks for what instances of it he partakes of, to seek to him* for what blessings he wants, and to carry it toward him in all things as his Maker, his Lord, and his Governor. He must know also, that since God is a righteous Governor, if he does not make good men happy in this world, and the wicked miserable, then there must be another world, wherein he will appoint some happiness for the good, and misery for the wicked; or in general, that he will some time or other distribute rewards and punishments to all persons, according to their behaviour: For this has a very considerable influence into all holiness of life, and every part of morality, which will hardly be practised without these motives.

As for the duties which relate to other men, every man must know and believe, that as he is placed here amongst a multitude of fellow-creatures of his own species or kind, he is bound to practise truth or veracity, justice and goodness toward them, according to the several relations in which he may stand, as *a father, brother, son, husband, neighbour, subject, master, servant, buyer, seller,* &c. And with regard to himself, he must know that he is bound to exercise *sobriety* and *temperance,* and to maintain *a due government over his appetites and passions,* that they run not into excess and extravagance. And finally, since every man will frequently find himself coming short of his duty to God and man, and betrayed into sin by the strength of his temptations, his appetites and passions, in the various occurrences of life, *he must repent of his sins,* be sincerely sorry

for what he has done amiss, *humbly ask forgiveness of God*, and endeavour *to serve and please him in all things for the time to come*, and he must exercise *a hope or trust in the mercy of God*, that upon repentance and new obedience, God will forgive sinners, and take them again into his favour.

Pithander. I grant that these articles seem to be the sum and substance of natural religion, and the most important and necessary parts of it: And I thank you, *Sophronius*, for so particular an enumeration of them: Though if I had a mind to dispute, I would enquire, whether there were not some more particulars necessary to complete true religion? I mean the religion of *sinning creatures*, in order to obtain the favour of God; and if I should strenuously insist upon these things, *Logisto*, perhaps you would find it hard to exclude them utterly from such a religion as shall be effectual to salvation.

Logisto. And if I had a mind, *Pithander*, to dispute too, I would say, here are several more articles brought together than I thought of, and our friend *Sophronius* hath named rather too many fundamentals for a heathen to believe and practise. But in the main, I confess, I know not well how to reject them with justice; and, to avoid contention, for the present I will submit to this enumeration, and we will argue upon them.

Sophronius. Gentlemen, I would fain have this matter well adjusted and agreed between you in the very beginning of your debate, that there may be no altercation about it afterward. If you please, therefore, I will very briefly give you my reasons, why I suppose these articles of belief and practice to be sufficient, where there is no revelation to lead men into the favour of God, and also why I can allow of very little abatement of them; though I am satisfied *many persons*, since the world began, and even *some of the christian faith*, have been saved without any *formal* knowledge of them in a regular scheme of propositions.

First, then, I can hardly think that a God of holiness and justice will require less than what I have represented, in order to obtain his favour and future happiness: For those persons must be very unfit inhabitants for heaven, where happiness consists in the *knowledge and love of God*, who have never learned on earth to know, and love, and honour the only true God, or who do not acknowledge him as Governor of the world, nor hope nor fear any rewards or punishments from his hands, or who bear no *true love to their neighbour*, nor govern themselves by any rules of *sobriety*, but allow and practise injustice and intemperance, or who never *repent of former sins*, nor ask God to forgive them.

On the other hand, those who know and fear, who love and honour *the only true God*, and are desirous to know his will, and to obey it as far as they know it, who are sober with regard to their own conduct, and just and merciful with regard to their neighbours, who are sensible they often fail in their duty, and sincerely repent of sin, who implore forgiveness of God, and hope in his mercy; these persons, I say, must certainly be in the main approved of God, notwithstanding their many failings. And I think God is too merciful a being to condemn such persons to everlasting punishment, or finally to reject those who sincerely love and obey him, though in strict justice their many sins and failings may deserve it. *Pithander* will please to remember also, that God himself has told us by the apostle Peter, *Acts* x. 35. in every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with him, though it is not supposed that any man can do it in full perfection.

Logisto. Well, *Pithander*, what have you to say against these reasonings? For my part, I think they carry great force with them; and we may both readily give our assent. I will therefore begin my argument, if you please.

Pithander. I am very unwilling to oppose what *Sophronius* has said: But I hope he will not take it ill, if I ask the favour of an answer to one question, before I give my complete assent to it, and before our debate begin.

Sophronius. With utmost freedom, sir, propose any objection, and I will either give a fair answer to the difficulty you propose, or submit to the force of it, and retract my opinion in this matter; for I am always ready to learn and receive instruction from any man, and particularly from gentlemen of your cloth; though I dare subject my understanding and conscience to *no master but Christ*.

Pithander. Then, sir, since you thus roundly profess yourself a christian, I would take the freedom to inquire, whether in every discovery of grace and mercy which God has made to sinful mankind, he hath not always enjoined some *positive institution and duty*, over and above the mere duties which the light of nature or reason could dictate to innocent or sinful man? When he gave our first parents any hope of favour after their sin, did he not enjoin *sacrifices*, at least as a shadow or token of *atonement?* Did he not appoint some faith or hope in a Mediator or Saviour, *viz. the seed of the woman, that should break the head of the serpent*, or *destroy the works of the devil?* Was not this positive institution of sacrifices continued also to Noah and to Abraham, together with some clearer accounts of a Messiah given to Abraham, and a demand of hope or trust in him? Were not the same positive institutions and requirements of sacrifice and trust in a *Messiah, a Saviour*, given to Moses and the Jews, together with many other rites and ceremonies, in order to their acceptance with God? And when Jesus Christ came into the world, a *faith* or *trust in this Messiah*, or trust in the mercy of God *through him*, was made a necessary qualification of our acceptance with God, besides repentance and new obedience, and an humble desire of forgiveness of past offences.

I grant indeed, that the ordinances which were given to Abraham, to the Jews, and to the gentiles to whom *the gospel of Christ was preached*, were not required of all the world. The special rules given to Abraham obliged *the family of Abraham;* those given to Moses obliged only the Jews; the particular and positive duties of christianity could oblige no families or nations but those to whom they were once made known; but the positive institution of sacrifices, and the hopes of some promised Saviour, were appointed to Adam and Noah, and their families, and these appointments, therefore, belong to *all nations of mankind*, for they were given to them all in those two general fathers of the world. My query now is, whether or no any nations under heaven, who never heard of Christ, can have any comfortable hopes of acceptance with God, if they practise not these positive duties of revelation, *viz.* sacrifices and trust in some Mediator or Saviour, over and above the natural duties of repentance, asking pardon of God, and new obedience, which the light of nature requires of every sinner?

Sophronius. Your query, *Pithander*, is of great importance in this controversy; and I am glad you started it, that I may clear the stage for your farther dispute, and make your work the easier on both sides. I will not dispute with you about the divine institution of sacrifices after the sin of Adam, for this is very probable, though not expressly revealed: And I will readily grant, that in every farther discovery of divine mercy to sinful men, there hath been generally something of such positive institutions required, as

well as the natural duties of repentance and future obedience, &c. But let us consider these few things, *viz.* First, That God is a Being of infinite goodness and holiness in himself, and delights in it in his creatures, and therefore must delight to exercise some mercy toward those who are holy, who return sincerely to his fear, and love, and holiness, and are so far partakers of his likeness, even though they happen to be ignorant of all positive institutions. Let us consider, in the second place, that the duties of repentance, the fear and love of God, and new obedience, and an humble seeking of pardon at the hands of God, are much more proper and more important qualifications to fit a soul for the favour of his Maker, and for heavenly blessedness, than any positive rites or appointments whatsoever. And let us, in the third place, consider yet farther, that God hath made this the avowed rule of our duty and of his dealings with men, that he loves and values *mercy more than sacrifice;* that is, that he esteems and prefers the natural duties of morality and piety above any positive rules or rites: and this he hath frequently manifested in the Old Testament and the New, as well as the light of nature teaches it.

Now, upon all these considerations, I think, we may be bold to say, that if these duties of true repentance, humble requests of forgiveness, and endeavours after new obedience, be performed according to the present utmost capacity of a sinful creature, who is not acquainted with any positive duties of divine institution, God *will surely shew himself well pleased with such an humble penitent:* We may, I think, infer with some assurance, that God *will never utterly exclude such a person*, and finally banish him from his favour, merely for want of his practice of some positive duties or institutions which he himself never heard of by any revelation, and which he could never come to the knowledge of by the best exercise of his reason.

Besides, sir, if we consider the accounts which scripture has given us of those who were the beloved servants of God in ancient ages, even his chief favourites, such as Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, &c. you find them indeed offering sacrifice according to the positive institutions of God, but you find very little of their own personal trust in a Mediator or Saviour, or in the mercy of God through a Mediator: much less do we find an account of the actual exercise of their faith in any atoning sacrifice of a Messiah to come. But besides their duties of repentance, asking pardon, and new obedience, &c. their hope seems generally to have been fixed on the mercy of God himself, without so particular an exercise of faith through a Mediator, so far as we can learn by their devotional writings, or the history of their own transactions with God: I do not say they did never place their hopes in such a Messiah, or Saviour to come; for I believe some of them had such a fiducial regard to him; but I may venture to say, that we find very little of this in their own devotions, even though several of them had this future Saviour revealed to them from heaven, and to the world by their lips or writings.

As for the doctrine of atonement for sin by the death of this Saviour, though I suppose it to be the real *ground and foundation* of all the pardoning grace that ever was dispensed to mankind, and though I conceive it to be a most important, if not a necessary, part of the religion of Christ, where the gospel is fully published, yet St. Peter did not know it a little before Christ's death, *Matt.* xvi. 22. when his fondness for the person of Christ would have forbid his sufferings: And Cornelius was accepted of God before he was taught the doctrine of Christ or his atonement; *his prayers and alms, his piety and charity, came up before God*, and were graciously accepted; *Acts* x. 4, 25. Upon the whole view of things, I think, from scripture and reason together, we may justly conclude, that

where Christ and the gospel are published, all humble sincere penitents, asking pardon of God, and hoping his mercy, though they know nothing of the particular way or method wherein it is, or hath been, or shall be revealed, shall not fail of pardon and acceptance with God at last, nor miss of some tokens of his favour. This grace hath Jesus procured, and God will bestow it.

Pithander. Your way of arguing, sir, carries so much light and conviction in it, that I cannot well deny your argument. And I am inclined to believe, that my excellent diocesan, the present Bishop of London, in his second Pastoral Letter, was much in this sentiment, when he expressed himself, page 46, in these words: *As to the heathens, though the light of reason is but dim, yet they who have no better light to walk by, and who honestly make use of that as the only guide God hath given them, cannot fail to be mercifully dealt with by infinite justice and goodness.*

Logisto. I am very glad the reasoning of *Sophronius* is so happily supported by the authority of the bishop, and both together have persuaded you to yield up this point, that God will accept of penitent sinners without their actual trust in sacrifices, or any positive rites of worship.

Pithander. I am not ashamed to confess, sir, that I pay great honour and deference to the sentiments of my superiors in the church; yet I would willingly see good reason also for what I believe: And I declare now, that I can give my assent in the main to what *Sophronius* hath delivered. If any little scruple remain, it will be adjusted in the course of our debate. But before you begin your argument, sir, I entreat you to remember both the precise point of question, and the extent of it; and that is, *whether human reason, in the present state of things, be sufficient to guide all mankind to such a degree of the knowledge and practice of religion,* as our friend has described, *such as may entitle them to the favour of God and future happiness.* Permit me, therefore, sir, to mention four particulars, which are to be accepted or excluded from the present dispute, as not being the proper and precise subject of it.

Logisto. Let us hear, *Pithander*, what are the four things you exclude from our debate?

Pithander. In the first place, sir, be pleased to observe, that we are not enquiring, whether the reason of man, in its original powers of innocency and perfection, could find out all the necessary parts of natural religion, *viz.* the knowledge of his Maker, and his duty to him and his fellow-creatures, as *Sophronius* has described them, so far as to secure to himself the love of his Maker in that innocent state: But whether man, in his present corrupt and degenerate circumstances, who is ready to mistake error for truth, whose reason is much blinded and biassed by the prevailing influences of flesh and sense, and perpetually led astray by appetites and passions, and so many thousand prejudices which arise from things both within him and without him; I say, whether human reason, in this degenerate state of man, be sufficient to teach him such a religion, as will restore a sinner to the favour of God, secure to him everlasting felicity, and render his immortal soul happy in the love of his Creator.

Logisto. Pray, *Pithander*, let us hear no more of this old dull story of the *degenerate and corrupt state of man.* It is a notion, indeed, that has prevailed for almost seventeen hundred years among christians, and even among the Jews long before them; but I can see little foundation for it. I think man is a very excellent being, as he was at first, and his reason, and his other faculties of soul, are noble powers, and have always been, and always will be sufficient to direct and bring him to the happiness for which his nature was

made, notwithstanding all your pretences of a *bruise* gotten by some ancient fall, which, as you say, reached all mankind in their powers, and weakened them even to this day.

Sophronius. Forgive me, *Logisto*, if I presume to interpose a word here, when I find you speaking with such spirit and warmth against an opinion which is not *peculiar* to the Jews and christians; for several of the *heathen philosophers* acknowledged and maintained it by the mere influence of the light of nature and reason. Antoninus, the philosophic emperor, confesses, that *we are born mere slaves*, that is, in the sense of the Stoics, slaves to our vicious inclinations and passions, destitute of all true knowledge and true reason. Book XI. Sect. 27. The Platonists are well known to believe *a pre-existent state wherein all souls sinned*, and they lost their wings whereby they were once capable of ascending upward, and so they sunk into these bodies, partly as a punishment for former follies. This was called in their form of speech, πτεροῤῥύησις, or a moulting of their wings. Their daily experience in themselves, and their wise observation of the world convinced them, that *all mankind come into the world with propensity to vice rather than virtue*, and that man is not such a creature now as he came from his Maker's hand, but is some way or other degenerated from his primitive rectitude and glory, though they indulged strange guesses at the cause of it, and indeed they were utterly at a loss to find how it came to pass. This is only revealed in the Bible.

Logisto. I thank you, *Sophronius*, for your gentle reproof. It is not at all improper for you to interpose, when you find any thing too keen and pungent escape from either of our lips in the course of disputation. This is one part of a moderator's office, and I beg *Pithander*'s pardon. But without more compliments we will pursue the point in hand. Let the heathens, Jews and christians of elder times say what they please of this degeneracy, some of your own writers now-a-days, who are in greatest credit amongst you, if they do not suspect the reality of the story of Adam and Eve, and the serpent, yet at least they deny such fatal effects of it as you have generally ascribed to the fall of man. To say the truth, they are almost grown weary of maintaining so harsh and so unreasonable a doctrine. Your learned Dr. Clarke tells us, that in Solomon's days as well as in ours, *God made man upright;* and notwithstanding all that can be said of the meanness and frailness of our nature, notwithstanding all the disadvantages we can allege ourselves to lie under in consequence of sin having been brought into the world, yet *God hath made man upright;* man, that is, the species or whole race of men. The uprightness therefore that Solomon speaks of in *Eccles.* vii. 29. cannot be the *original uprightness* which was forfeited by the sin of our first parents, but that *continued uprightness* with which every man comes into the world notwithstanding the fall. See Dr. Clarke's Sermon XIV. printed in his life-time.

Pithander. I am sorry to find a christian writer talk at the rate this learned author does in that sermon. And indeed if the corruption of human nature be so small, and its present powers so sufficient for the purposes of religion and virtue, as he represents them in that discourse, I wonder how he could speak of so universal a depravation amongst mankind, as he does in his excellent book of Revealed Religion, *Prop.* v. vi. vii. which made revelation so necessary. But I wave this point at present, lest it should draw us aside too soon from our intended subject into another debate, *viz.* about original sin. I would therefore only take notice to you, *Logisto*, and I suppose you will easily grant, that man in his present condition, is liable to many mistakes in his search of truth and duty; and that he often fails in *practice of the rules of duty* when they are known; and that

there is something more that is necessary to be known and practised, that a sinful creature may recover the love and favour of his Maker when he is offended, than there was for an innocent creature in order to keep himself in the love of God; and that is, as our friend *Sophronius* has expressed it, the duty of repentance on our part, and the grace of forgiveness on the part of God.

Logisto. This is not to be denied, sir, and therefore I readily allow it. But what then? Is not the reason of man sufficient to find out these things?

Pithander. Give me leave, sir, to say again, that we are not inquiring whether human reason, in its *best estate*, could find out the religion of an innocent creature, whereby he might continue in his Maker's love; but whether, under all present disadvantages, prejudices, mistakes, passions, &c. his reason be sufficient to find out all things necessary for a guilty creature to obtain forgiveness of his offended Creator, and to procure to himself immortal happiness in a future state, notwithstanding his past offences.

Logisto. I approve of your accuracy, my friend, in this point, and I affirm that the reason of man in his present state, though he often errs and often offends God, is yet sufficient to instruct and lead him into all that is needful to obtain pardon and happiness. Well, what is the next thing you would except out of our dispute?

Pithander. In the second place then I would observe, that we are not to debate whether we, who have been educated in a christian nation, and have been trained up from our infancy to hear and learn a thousand things which the ignorant heathens never hear of; I say, whether we, by our force of reason, can draw out a connected scheme of religion in the several truths and duties of it, which might lead a sinner to obtain the favour of God; but whether one who was born and brought up in the dark regions of heathenism, and never had any happy hints given him by tradition or by conversation, could find out by his own reasoning powers such a scheme of virtue and godliness, as would be sufficient to bring him to the divine favour, and the felicity of another world? We are greatly mistaken in supposing, that the understanding of a heathen would lead him into all those well-connected sentiments concerning God and man, virtue and piety, which are found even among common persons educated under the bright influence of christianity. Mr. Locke, in his Reasonableness of Christianity, page 269. says, *That if christian philosophers have much outdone the heathens in their systems of morality;* he ascribes it to their knowledge of *revelation. Every one*, says he, *may observe a great many truths which he receives at first from others, and readily assents to, as consonant to reason, which he would have found it hard, or perhaps beyond his strength, to have discovered of himself. Native and original truth is not so easily wrought out of the mine, as we who have it delivered ready dug and fashioned to our hands, are apt to imagine.* Permit me to add, sir, with all just deference and respect to your bright genius and your happy reasoning powers, I can hardly imagine that you yourself would have been able, with utmost study, to draw up such an accurate and comprehensive scheme of natural religion, as *Sophronius* has now given extempore, if you had been so unhappy as to be born and bred among none but heathens. I believe it will be granted by all, that neither Plato, nor Aristotle, nor Seneca, nor Epictetus, nor Cicero, nor the greatest names and wits of antiquity, have left us so clear and rational and compendious a system of religion and virtue, as our friend *Sophronius* has set before us in the present conversation.

Logisto. I allow this further limitation of the question, *Pithander*, though I can hardly admit your reason for it. I am therefore free to assert, that even in heathen

countries, where not the least ray of christianity has shined, their own reason of itself has light enough to guide men in their way through this world to a better.

Pithander. I proceed then, sir, in the third place, to say, we are not enquiring at present what degree of knowledge here and there a heathen philosopher may possibly arrive at, who gave himself up to retirement and study, under the advantages of a learned education; but what acquaintance with religion *the bulk of mankind* in the heathen countries could acquire by their own reason, many of whom have but a low genius, poor natural parts, and those uncultivated, and whose views are very narrow, and their powers of reasoning exceeding feeble? What could they do to find out the rules of religion and virtue for themselves, who are continually busied in the affairs of life, to provide meat, drink, and clothing for themselves and their household, or pursuing the grandeurs, honours, or pleasures of life with impetuous appetite and constant application? Could human reason, sir, as it is found in these busy people, especially in the low ranks of life, or in persons of low parts, frame such a religion for themselves, and such rules of virtue, as to entitle them to their Maker's favour. Mistake me not, *Logisto*, as if I here granted, that the philosophers, even in Rome or Athens, the brightest and the best of them, did ever find out such a scheme of religion as would lead mankind to heaven and eternal happiness, or such a system as could be effectual to reform the world, or were ever like to do it. Dr. Clarke himself has sufficiently shewn to the contrary in his treatise of Revealed Religion. See his v. and vi. propositions, which he hath abundantly proved at large. The learned Mr. Millar in that excellent work, his History of the Propagation of Christianity, has made it plain beyond all just exception, vol. i. page 36—50. Edit. 3. This book is cited with honour by the bishop of London, in his Second Pastoral Letter, which hath set this matter also in a strong light, from page 7. to page 38. Mr. Locke himself, whom all the world admires as a master of reason, and who allowed as much power to human reason as one could well desire, asserts in his Reasonableness of Christianity, page 268. *Natural religion, in its full extent, was no where, that I know of, taken care of by the force of natural reason. It should seem by the little that hath hitherto been done in it, that it is too hard a thing for unassisted reason to establish morality, in all its parts, upon its true foundations with a clear and convincing light.* You see, *Logisto*, what great names I produce to you, even among modern and rational writers, who will not allow the heathen philosophers to be able to furnish the world with a good scheme of religion and virtue. But suppose these virtuosos had done it with much labour and fatigue of thought, yet can you imagine the unlearned and vulgar part of the world, the labourers for daily bread, could ever frame such a scheme for themselves? Could human reason, in the poor and busy parts of cities, towns, and villages, find out such a religion as would lead them into the favour of God? The grand enquiry is not, whether reason could possibly conduct a few bright and studious men to religion and happiness; but whether it is sufficient, as the case of human nature and the circumstances of human life now stand, under so many weaknesses and prejudices, so many businesses and cares of life, to reform the bulk of the world, or to guide them into such a reformation as might bring them to heaven.

Logisto. Well, I grant this point also, and affirm the sufficiency of reason in heathen blacksmiths, in cobblers and milkmaids, in the followers of the plough, and the drudges of the mill, to find out and practise religion sufficient to save them.

Pithander. Then, dear sir, I will try your patience but with one exception more, and that is, that though human reason in the busy tribes of the world, as well as philosophers, should have been capable of learning religion and virtue in such a city as Rome or Athens, in Europe; as Pekin in China; as Smyrna or Ephesus, in the lesser Asia, and other polite countries, where they are aided by their converse with learned men and philosophers,* yet are the reasoning powers of the savage nations in Africa and America sufficient for this purpose? For I conceive this is the present point of our debate, whether all mankind, even the meanest figures of it, in the darkest, the most barbarous and uncultivated nations of the earth, have in themselves such a principle of reason as is a sufficient light to guide them to happiness.

Logisto. Well then, I hope we have now settled the point with great exactness; and I declare I am of this mind, that every rational being, in all the regions and quarters of the world, has such principles of understanding and will within him, if he will but use them aright, as are sufficient to lead him into the knowledge and practice of religion and virtue, so far as to procure for him a happy immortality: That his reason is able to lead him into such an acquaintance with his Maker's will, and obedience to it, as to engage the favour of his benevolent Maker towards him, or to recover his favour when at any time he has sinned and exposed himself to his anger. And indeed, if man has not sufficient powers for this purpose, I should think God had dealt worse with mankind, who, as you all say, *was made after his Maker's image*, than he has with any of the lower ranks of creation, even the insects and the poor creeping things of the earth.

Pithander. The equity of the great God in dealing with his creatures may perhaps be debated another time; but I think we have now fully selected and distinguished the plain argument that lies directly before us; and that which you so often assert is this, that the light of reason in every man is sufficient to find out his way to the favour of God and happiness by religion and virtue: And what these articles of virtue and religion are, what these doctrines and duties which are so necessary for this purpose, *Sophronius* has just now informed us. I entreat you, sir, proceed now to the proof of your assertion according to the particular articles *Sophronius* has proposed, and to save time, I will not insist upon your proof of all of them, but only those that seem most difficult: And first, be pleased, sir, to tell us, how a wild heathen would find out that there is but one God?

Logisto. As reason very easily discovers to us that there is a God who has made all things by the evident tokens of wisdom and power, which appear in the works of his hands, so the ingenious Dr. Clarke informs us, in his sermon of the Unity of God, that "The doctrine of the whole world being under the government of one God, is the natural notion which the light of reason itself has universally implanted in the minds of men: For the plain connection and dependence of one thing upon another, through the whole material universe, through all the parts of the earth, and in the visible heavens, the

* Yet let it be observed here, that the common people and the gentlemen, even in polite countries, received their religion rather from their priests and their rulers than from the lectures and reasonings of their philosophers: They much more easily, willingly, and universally learned and practised all the impious and shameful idolatries and superstitions of their country, than ever they would hearken to the lectures of their philosophers, whose moral dictates of virtue and mortification, and whose abstracted reasonings on the chief good, were neither suited to their taste nor to their understanding: and especially when many of these philosophers neglected to practise their own rules of virtue, and all of them complied with the religions of their country, vile and abominable religions and superstitious rites which tended to corrupt all their moral principles, and to destroy their virtue, if ever the seeds of it began to appear, as I shall shew afterward.

disposition of the air, and sea, and winds, the motion of the sun, and moon, and stars, and the useful vicissitudes of seasons for the regular production of the various fruits of the earth, has always been sufficient to make it evidently appear, even to mean capacities, had they not been perpetually prejudiced by wrong instruction, that all things are under the direction of one power, under the dominion of one God, to whom the whole universe is uniformly subject." Thus far Dr. Clarke. And do you not think this argument would lead mankind to the unanimous belief that there is but one true God?

Pithander. No, sir, by no means: I can never think it could convince ignorant heathens of the unity of God, if it should ever happen to come into their minds: for I think it hath hardly evidence enough to give conviction to a common reasoner in the christian world. The force of it does not appear so very plain and clear to demand a ready assent and submission: I do not think the union of all beings in the universe under one Lord, is so very manifest and so obvious a thing. And indeed, I should have expected to find a much stronger argument for the unity of God, from a writer of such fame and reputation, and especially in a sermon that was written expressly on that subject, which he every where maintains with peculiar zeal. But suppose this argument should be thought strong and evident, to a person who is before convinced of the unity of God; yet an American in the north would tell you, as they have told other enquirers, that the Europeans, &c. who live beyond the great sea, that is, the ocean, dwell in a different world from them, and may have a God and every thing else peculiar to themselves: But that the Americans came into being quite another way, and sprung from another man or woman, who came down from heaven in ancient times. For though they have some ideas of beings above them, yet they have not so much as a name for God among them. So that they would as readily conclude, from the distance of the European and American worlds, that they had different superior powers, or gods, as the ancient Grecians concluded that three gods divided the universe among them; that heaven and earth had one god, *viz.* Jupiter; the sea another god, *viz.* Neptune; and hell, or the world of departed souls, had a third god, *viz.* Pluto.

Logisto. This is strange doctrine indeed: Yet since you tell me this is the opinion of the wild creatures in America, I am not so well acquainted with them as to contradict it. But why do you cite the several names of the old poetical gods against me, as though the rambling and irrational fancies of the old heathen poets were to be regarded, when we are talking of the powers of reason to find out the one true God?

Pithander. I grant, sir, there were a thousand fables of the poets concerning these heathen gods, which could not be heartily believed, at least by thinking men: But, alas! sir, it is a very unthinking world in which we dwell: And the priests, and the princes, and the people had really the same gods whom I have named, with many others, and they actually raised temples to them, and worshipped them with sacrifices and divine honours, and they had no other gods but such as these.

Logisto. But the *philosophers* knew there was but one true God.

Pithander. Permit me, sir, to say, that few of them knew or owned this: If the *Platonists* had generally this opinion, yet the *Stoics* themselves, as well as meaner sects, talk of more gods than one continually. And please to remember, sir, our present debate is about the bulk of the heathen world, and not about a few philosophers. How can the world find out so easily that God is but one?

Logisto. Well, what think you then of another argument? It is very evident, and reason assures us, that the Creator of all things is a Being that hath all power, and wisdom and goodness necessary to create and govern the universe: And if one God has all this perfection of wisdom, and power, and goodness, then another such a being would be utterly needless and useless; for one more, or one hundred more such beings, could have no more wisdom, power, or goodness than one. Now we can never suppose that a God is a useless or a needless being; and therefore there cannot be any more gods than one, because all the rest would be needless beings, and entirely useless; for there would be nothing for them to do, which one could not do.

Pithander. I grant this argument is in itself convincing to a good reasoner: yet if these two are the easiest ways you can think of to prove the unity of God, I doubt there are multitudes of creatures in the wild heathen world, that with their utmost efforts of reason, would never of themselves arise to these sentiments, nor form these arguments: And if both of them were put together, and proposed to heathens, I question whether they would make their way into every understanding among those wild and uncultivated herds of mankind, and convince them all that there was but one God: Much less can I suppose they would ever find out these arguments of themselves. The bulk of the heathen world have generally believed and worshipped many gods, though many of them did confess that *one was supreme;* and almost every nation hath had *its own God:* And in direct opposition to Dr. Clarke's argument, when they saw such a vast variety of parts in the universe, they commonly appropriated particular parts of the creation to particular gods; supposing them to have only the oversight of the affairs, if I may so speak, of their own province. As gross as this error is, yet it is plain and certain matter of fact, that the heathens in ancient times, and in almost all nations, did argue thus, and do to this day. Besides, since there is such an innumerable and everlasting train of wickedness and distresses, that is, moral and natural evils, among the children of men, the heathens might be ready to suppose as many amongst them have done, *that there was some equally powerful principle of evil*, as there is of good; for man sustains as many sorrows, miseries, and mischiefs as he enjoys comforts and blessings. And since there are such infinite calamities in the world by storms, earthquakes, famines, plagues, wars, murders, diseases, and the universal dominion and necessity of death, they might be easily confirmed in this false opinion, and refuse the belief of *one supreme God.*

Logisto. Really, *Pithander*, you amaze me; I never met with any man before who would not allow the unity of God might be found by the reason of men.

Pithander. Mistake me not, sir, I do not deny that it may not be found; but I say, it is not very obvious and easy to the rude and uncultivated reason of every heathen: so that I question whether one in ten in the common race of mankind, or one in a hundred in the countries who lie under the prejudices of *polytheism*, would find it out merely of themselves, without any helps or hints from tradition, or their wiser neighbours, and would firmly believe the truth of it. It is only revelation that has so fully confirmed and preserved or restored this fundamental point of all true religion, and set it in a clear and easy light. *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord,—and there is no other God but he;* Mark xii. 29, 32. But proceed, sir, to the next point, *viz. the goodness of God,* and shew me whether that lies within the compass and reach of reason, so as to be easily proved by an untaught American.

Logisto. By what you have said, my friend, you think, perhaps, that the goodness of God is an attribute of the divine nature scarce to be found out at all by the poor wild Indians: But do not the variety and sufficiency of provisions that God hath made for the food, and life, and pleasure of every creature in the world, plainly shew his universal goodness? Must not every man, who opens his eyes upon the creation, be ready to confess it?

Pithander. But a poor Indian would be as ready to say, that the vast variety of pains and necessities, of diseases and miseries, and deaths, to which all mankind are made liable in common with the rest of creatures do incline him to believe, that though God has goodness in him, yet he is not perfectly good; otherwise he would prevent these innumerable evils: And if we christians ourselves, with all the advantages of the Bible, find some difficulty in maintaining the perfect goodness of God, when he suffers so much both of sinful and penal evil to enter into this world, and abound, while he could easily have prevented it; I fear the ignorant savage, with all his reasoning powers, would be much more ready to think that God was not so good a being as he should be; or, as I said before, that there was some almighty evil power, *some mischievous god*, which opposed him, so that he could not do all the good he would. But pray, sir, go on to the next head, and shew me that the justice of God is an attribute so easy to be found.

Logisto. I own, that the wild heathens have argued thus against divine goodness: But his justice surely may be found with ease: It is true, in this world *all things come* so much *alike to all* men, that God does not make so sensible a distinction between the men of virtue and the men of vice, as to give ground to a rude heathen to infer his justice: But then reason may teach them, that since God is an all-wise and good Being, he will not let good men always be sufferers, nor appoint evil men to be always happy; for this is contrary to the reason and harmony of things. And therefore they may readily infer, that there must be another world, or a state after this life, in which God will reward the righteous and punish the wicked; and this is what I mean by his justice.

Pithander. Whatever a deep philosopher might do, or a reasoner in a christian country, I am afraid a poor Indian labourer, a digger, a fisher, or a huntsman, would be as ready to infer that whatsoever mighty Being it was that made the world at first, yet he now lets it run at random, and doth not much regard the actions of his creatures, whether good or bad: And perhaps he would be more ready to think that it was as much or more his own business, and his interest, to make the best that he could of this world, and to free himself from the miseries of it by fraud or force, by right or wrong, rather than to bear the injuries and oppressions, as well as the common calamities of life with patience, and to expect that some almighty and invisible being should reward him in the next world, if he were never so virtuous, since he sees so very few instances of such a righteous rewarding power among all the events of this life, or when he rather finds that the wicked oppressors are the most prosperous and happy. But, to pass over this head also, tell me, sir, how you would prove to a wild American, or rather, how a wild American would prove to himself, that there is any such thing as another world, or state of retribution after this life? Yet I think it is generally acknowledged, that true religion, in the practice of it in this world, as things stand, seems very much to depend upon this point, and is greatly promoted by it.

Logisto. Nay, *Pithander*, if you do not allow this argument for a future state drawn from the wisdom and justice of God, and the want of a just retribution of virtue and

vice in the present state, I confess I am at a loss how the poor heathens can prove it: But I must insist upon it, I think this is a good argument.

Pithander. And I think it is of weight among persons that are well civilized, and taught to exercise their reason well: But it would be no easy matter for every single savage, both man and woman, to prove that God is just: Nor would the doctrine of future retributions be readily found out among the wretched inhabitants of the eastern or western Indies, who are so unpractised in the art of reasoning, if they were left only to their own rude labours of thought. I will not deny but some of the heathens, and even in some of the islands of America, have had such a sentiment; but these, perhaps, are but few in number: the bulk of them on the north continent seem to have no such opinion: Nor is it likely their wild reasoning powers should work this way, or should reach so far.

Logisto. Indeed, sir, you surprise me again with such talk as this; for in my opinion, nothing can be more repugnant to the wisdom and justice, as well as the goodness of God, than to suppose that this short life was designed as a state of probation for mankind, in order to their existing hereafter in a state of perpetual happiness or misery, and yet that God doth not let them know that there was to be such a state immediately succeeding this life.

Pithander. If I were to give a particular answer to this objection, I would say, that however this our short life may be designed by God himself as a state of probation for perpetual happiness or misery in the next, yet perhaps it is not absolutely necessary that God should acquaint his creature, man, with it: For in whatsoever state a creature is placed, it is his duty to exert his utmost power to seek out the knowledge of his Maker's will, and to practise it without intermission, so long as his Creator pleases to continue him in that state. And then he may, if his Maker think proper, be removed into some new state of further trial: For if God may confine one man fifty, sixty, or seventy years to a state of probation in this world, why may he not dismiss another out of it at ten, twenty, or thirty years end, and appoint him to fill up the remnant of his probationary state in another world, or in two or three successive worlds, if he please? What is there in the pure nature of things to forbid it? And what can mere reason say to disprove it? But on the other hand, if a creature in this world has neglected his duty, and behaved amiss, he may justly expect anger and punishment from his Maker, into whatsoever unknown state he shall remove him. Now this is sufficient to vindicate the justice of God, if he had not put it at all into the power of a creature to find out which is his state of probation, or how long it shall last, or how many probations he shall go through, or when his state of retribution shall begin, or how long that shall endure.

I confess, indeed, that the knowledge and certain expectation of the state of rewards and punishments after this life, is a most desirable thing for mankind, since it has a great and powerful influence on the practice of virtue and religion here; and I allow that it may be so far found, by a careful and wise exercise of reason, upon the survey of things in this world, that a righteous God will not deal with the good man and the wicked just in the same manner in all the future states, but will make a sensible difference between vice and virtue: Constant and persevering piety shall be some way or other rewarded at last, and obstinate iniquity and irreligion shall be punished. But all that I maintain at present against you, sir, is this, That the doctrine of future and certain rewards at the end of this life, is not so necessary to be manifested to creatures in this life as to cast an

accusation of injustice against God, if he does not make them sensible of it: nor is it so evident to our mere reasoning powers, nor so easy and so obvious to every man in the world as you may imagine: You know, sir, the whole sect of the Sadducees denied it: Nor is it so plain, that the wild tribes of the negroes, or the Iroquois should readily find it out: For, in fact, many of them are ignorant of it to this day. Your silence, *Logisto*, discovers a generous conviction. Then let us proceed to some other points in natural religion, and enquire how easy it would be for the bulk of the heathen world to find them out: Pray tell me, sir, how an American might easily convince himself that God governs the world at all, or takes any notice of it, when he sees things run at random, and a thousand events among mankind so unsuitable to the conduct of a wise governor, so far as our view of things can reach.

Logisto. Surely an American has reason enough to find out and be assured of this, that the Almighty Being who made all things, must certainly have the knowledge of all the creatures that he has made, and of all their actions? And that he cannot but see the virtues of the righteous with approbation, because they reverence their Maker and practise what is right: And that he beholds the vices of the wicked with disgust and resentment, because they neglect their duty, or disobey the laws of nature which he has written in their hearts: And therefore, though he does not immediately interpose to shew his approbation or resentment by present sensible rewards or punishments, yet he will certainly do it one time or another.

Pithander. I think, sir, this is little more than a bare repetition of the same thing you urged in other words, and few American savages exercise their reason so far. Give me the liberty therefore, sir, to amplify what I have said: When these rude creatures see year after year, and age after age, that there is no such equitable distinction made by providence between the good and the bad, when the wicked flourish in health, in success, and plenty, when the peaceful and sober man falls perhaps under more oppressions and injuries than the men of wrath and violence, and labours under natural wants and diseases in common with other men: When they observe iniquity and oppression fill the seats of power and government among men in this life, and that among christians as well as heathens; and that all die alike, and go down to their graves without any sensible and remarkable distinction in favour of the men of virtue; I tell you, friend, the bulk of the wild American world will have much ado to think that a wise God governs the world, or even so much as regards or knows the actions of his creatures. They will be ready to take up with those atheistical sentiments represented in scripture: "How doth God know? Can he judge through the dark cloud? Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth not. That which befalleth beasts, befalleth also the sons of men, they have all one breath; as the one dieth so dieth the other; so that a man has no pre-eminence above a beast, all go unto one place, all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again: What profit is it that we should serve God, or pray unto him? we desire not the knowledge of his ways." If it cost Solomon, the wisest of men, some labour of thought and enquiry, and cost David his father, before him, such a painful inward conflict to solve these difficulties, as appears in *Psalm* lxxiii. and *Eccles.* iii. 16. how much need may we suppose the tribes of the heathen world have of some brighter teacher than their own rude faculties to find out and determine, that this world and the inhabitants of it, are at all governed by an all-wise and almighty Being.

Logisto. I confess, *Pithander*, some of these are difficulties of which I was not so

well apprized before-hand, and I am convinced it is not so easy for a wild heathen to find out some of these necessary truths as I imagined. But however, let us go on. What is the next article of natural religion that you suppose would hardly come within the reach of the reasoning of a wild American?

Pithander. Why truly, *Logisto*, I think the worship of an invisible God, with prayer, or praise, or thanksgiving, is not so very obvious a duty to those rude and ignorant creatures, nor does it appear to them so necessary as we who dwell in Europe are ready to fancy. Pray let us hear then, how their own uninstructed reason would lead them to this general and necessary duty of the worship of the invisible Being who made them, or any particular instances of it?

Logisto. One would think this a very easy matter for the meanest principle of reason, and the lowest capacity to find out: For if they once come so far as to acknowledge that the world was made by a Being of great wisdom and power, surely they may readily infer that they should admire and reverence this wisdom and power that made them, and all things around them: They may speedily and naturally draw such obvious consequences, that he alone is Lord of all things, that he can supply all their wants, and bestow all blessings upon them, and therefore they ought to pray to him under every distress, and to give thanks when they receive any of the comforts of life from his hands.

Pithander. Ah! my friend, this is easily said by a man of your sprightly powers of reasoning, who have been trained up in the knowledge of the best philosophy, and acquainted with religion from your early years: But you know that even in Greece and Rome, the learned parts of the world, and in the learned ages of it, there were many who professed and learned the epicurean doctrine, that the gods did neither make the world, nor concern themselves about it since it was made: That all things were left to nature and chance, and that there was no manner of superior government or divine inspection of the affairs of mankind, and therefore they paid no worship, no acknowledgments by prayer or praise. And as for an ignorant American, if he should be brought to believe that an invisible Power made this world, yet he is so much addicted to judge of every thing by what strikes his senses, that he will not so easily conceive that any invisible Power governs any of the affairs or events of it, except where he cannot account for some particular strange events or appearances, and then perhaps he will attribute them to invisible and insensible causes. For in the account that hath been given of the Americans by travellers, we are told, when they see strange effects produced, and know not the cause, they ascribe it to a being that is somewhat above themselves, that is, some particular being which has dominion over that event, or in that particular place, but scarce ever rise to the idea of one supreme and universal Governor; much less do they proceed so far in religion as to give *the one true God the glory and honour due to him* on account of their comforts.

But, on the other hand, when their whole business is to provide a little food for themselves, and the skins of beasts for their clothing, and when they see that it is their own bow and arrows, or their little snares or engines, that furnish them with beasts, or birds, or fishes for their provision; when they find the strongest, and the swiftest, and the most cunning men amongst them catch more game than the rest, secure themselves best from their enemies, and preserve their huts and their poor properties safest from invaders, they naturally attribute their possessions of all the necessaries and conveniences of life to their own strength, or skill, or swiftness; and they do not much think of any superior

invisible Being, whose providence gives them success: And thus in their rude way of thinking they can seldom find any reason either for prayer or thankfulness: And when they do, it is paid to idols, not to the true God. Besides, when they observe the natural and constant successions of day and night, of summer and winter, when they see fruits and flowers return in their settled seasons, when they take notice of clouds and sunshine, rain and drought, sudden heat or cold coming at certain or uncertain times, when they find how much the conveniences or inconveniences of life arise from these vicissitudes of things, they ascribe all that is constant and regular to a course of nature; and what is accidental or irregular among these common appearances, they ascribe to mere chance, and look no further. They content themselves to mind their proper businesses of hunting, fowling and fishing, to support their lives, and never think of any providence of an all-wise and almighty Being, unless they see some very uncommon and extraordinary event, as hurricanes or earthquakes, some terrible storm, or some spreading desolation, which perhaps they may attribute to some invisible mighty Being that is angry with them.

Logisto. But surely they must all know that they did not make themselves, and that some almighty Being made them, and therefore he alone can preserve them, and to him therefore they should be naturally and easily led to address their acknowledgments and praises.

Pithander. When you infer, *Logisto*, that praise and acknowledgments are due to the almighty Being that made them, they will hardly allow of your prime proposition, nor do they suppose that any other being besides their parents, had a hand in making them: And this cuts off all their devotion to an invisible Creator. For though they may perhaps be led to think, that a Being of great wisdom and power *made this world at first, and formed the first creatures that were in it*, if they ever look so far backward, yet now they imagine he has left the great engine of the world to work of itself: And that seeds produce trees, fruits, and flowers; that fishes produce fishes; birds make birds; lions and sheep produce new lions and sheep; and men and women breed children. Nor do they imagine there is any need of any superior power to preserve them, since they find their parents who produced them have no other hand in their preservation but by taking care of them when they are children; and when they are grown up, they preserve themselves by providing food and raiment for themselves, and other necessaries. Nor indeed is it so very easy a matter for an untaught American, under his prejudices, rising from the customs and opinions of his ancestors, to find out that any God at all has a present influence on the events of the world, or the affairs of men; but only, as I hinted before, when they see some uncommon appearance in nature or providence, it awakens them to think of some superior power governing that event; and then perhaps they may ask this fancied power to favour their enterprizes; but much oftener they endeavour to pacify some God when they suppose he is angry, by some awkward superstitions, or perhaps with murder and human sacrifices.

Logisto. Then you will grant, my friend, that there are some seasons wherein they worship God, though it be in a wretched way?

Pithander. Truly, I can hardly grant this, sir; for it is a plain case, that many of these people pay all the religion they have to some things visible or invisible, which are not God, as the apostle says; 1 Cor. x. 20. *The gentiles sacrifice to devils, and not to God.*

Logisto. But the gentiles of whom Paul there speaks, did not mean to do honour to mischievous beings, though the apostle is pleased to call all their gods by the name of *devils.*

Pithander. I grant they did not always mean so, though it was so in reality; for devils were really the gods of this world, that is, the heathen world. But it is plain, that the ancient heathens had also their mischievous gods, their *vejoves*—whom they sometimes worshipped for fear of their malice, as well as their good-natured gods, and they did service and sacrifice to both of them. And many, if not most, of those savage American and African nations have a more awful and religious apprehension of some unseen great evil power or powers that bring calamities upon them, than they have of any wise and good being which is the Author of their blessings. And they generally pay their devotion and worship to these powerful malicious beings rather than they do to any other God. Self-preservation and fear are more deeply wrought into our nature, at least in the degenerate state, than gratitude and love: And if those poor ignorant creatures had an unequal idea of some good God to what they have of a malicious one, that is, a devil, yet they incline to worship the devil for fear, lest he should hurt them, much more than they are inclined to worship God, and give him thanks and honours for benefits received, or pray to him for what they want: For they generally take it for granted, that the great and good Being, if ever they think of such one, will do them good from his own kind and beneficent temper: But the evil being will never do them any good, but will afflict and vex them, and will not suffer them to enjoy good things, unless they bribe and pacify him with worship and sacrifices: But they seem to have no notion of that holy reverence and love which is due to the true God.

Some of these rude nations make images for their gods: And the bulk of the people are so stupid as to pay rites of adoration to the very images they have made; though some of the wiser sort suppose these images to be inhabited by spirits, which can do them good or harm. The travels of Europeans through the barbarous regions, which are continually published among us, and their narratives of the affairs, sentiments, and customs of the rude and wild nations, give abundant confirmation to what I have said upon this theme, and effectually shew us how unable are mankind, with all their reason, in the stupid, rude and unpolished tribes of Africa, or America, to find out a religion for themselves, *to search out* the nature and attributes of the true God, or to determine what honours are due to the Almighty power that made and governs all things. The jewish prophet says much the same things concerning the stupor of the heathen idolaters in his age about affairs of religion. Isaiah xliv. 15—20. *He maketh a graven image out of a tree, he falls down, and saith to it, deliver me, for thou art my God. None considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge or understanding to say, I have burnt part of it in the fire, and shall I make the residue of it an idol, a god? Shall I fall down to the stock of a tree? He feedeth on ashes, a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, and say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?*

Logisto. Though I am not so much moved by what Isaiah saith, considered as a jewish prophet, yet it must be granted indeed, that the accounts which some of the ancient writers, as well as some modern travellers, give us of barbarous nations, afford us too much ground to suspect, that the reason of man is so darkened and stupified among these wild tribes of the heathen world, that it will go but a little way to search out true religion in the doctrines or the duties of it. But, it may be, the great God, who

knows the weaknesses and the prejudices of all his creatures, will not require much practice of that religion or piety, which are due to God, at the hands of such poor sorry wretches as these are; and if they do but behave tolerably well with regard to the duties they owe to themselves and their fellow-creatures, he may have compassion upon their ignorance, and receive them to his favour.

Pithander. I cannot allow this by any means, my friend, that a wise and holy God will provide a heaven and eternal happiness, in his favour and presence, for creatures that never enquire after him, that scarce know any thing at all of him, and never pay him any manner of honour on earth, which is the place of their probation. But however, let us proceed to enquire, How much the native reason of such savages would find out of their own duty to their fellow-creatures?

Logisto. Well, here I think I shall prove my point effectually, how much soever I may have failed in the former case of duty to the true God. Will not their own native reason teach them *that they must speak truth to one another; that they must be faithful to their promises and contracts; that they must pay what they owe; that they must neither rob, nor plunder, nor steal, nor take away the life nor property of another*, who has not first deserved such a punishment by some robbery, or murder, or theft committed against his neighbour? Will not their reason powerfully and evidently shew them, that there is a natural rectitude and fitness in these practices of veracity, honesty, and justice between man and man? That it is a fit, a reasonable, and proper thing, *that a man should do no injury to those who do not hurt him? That he should be honest in all his dealings*, and *that he should help his neighbour in distress, and be kind to the miserable*, who cannot help themselves?

Pithander. I grant, that the reason and conscience that is in man, will generally shew him, that there is a reasonableness and fitness in these practices, which we call virtues, if he will but set himself seriously and honestly to think of them. But yet, if one of these Americans, or his wife, or children, stand in great need of some of the wild fowl, the venison, the parched corn, or the deer-skin, which are the property of his neighbour, he would be ready to think it, perhaps, a much more fit and reasonable thing that he should steal or plunder, or even kill his neighbour, to gain these provisions, than that he and his family should be exposed to any hardships for the want of them. The principle of self-love, and of seeking the ease and happiness of ourselves, or those that are dear to us, might dictate to such an unphilosophical tribe, that it is more reasonable and more fit to plunder, and steal, or do any injury to their neighbour, if they could do it with safety to themselves.

Logisto. But the reason, even of Americans, if it be exercised a little, will further inform them, that without the observance of truth, faithfulness, honesty, justice, and innocence, there can be no safety to man, woman, or child; they cannot preserve their own property, life, or peace; that the strong, the swift, and the cunning, will deprive the rest of all their comforts and possessions; and therefore, in order to secure their own life and property, they must not invade the life or property of another. And will not their own reason tell them also, that they must be compassionate to the miserable; that they must help their neighbours in distress; that they must be kind and bountiful to those with whom they dwell; or else they can never expect that others should be kind and bountiful to them, should relieve any of their wants, or help them under their greatest distresses?

Thus the very law of self-preservation, which is written so strongly in the very nature of men, leads them to practise the duties of justice and goodness towards their neighbours.

Pithander. I may venture to grant what you have now said upon this subject: And these are the reasons, and the only reasons, upon which even the barbarous nations generally practise some degrees of justice and goodness towards one another. But is this proper virtue? Has this any merit in the sight of God, or any pretence to his favour? Can this be religion, when men are restrained from doing injury to their neighbours, or excited to do them good merely upon civil principles, without any idea or apprehension of the will of God, who requires it; or when they do it merely for fear, lest they should be exposed to the same injuries among men by way of retaliation, or in hopes to obtain the like good return from them? Can this sort of virtue intitle any man to the love of God, and rewards in a future world, which has no regard to God at all? Will this sort of reasoning conduct men to heaven, if their practices were never so agreeable to these principles? True virtue and religion arise chiefly from a sense of the reasonableness and fitness of things, and from a desire to obey the will of God. If I would be truly virtuous, I must consider that it is unrighteous and unreasonable to take away my neighbour's life or property, though I myself should never endanger my own property, nor be taken and punished for doing it. And such virtue as is pleasing to God, and can make any pretences to obtain his favour, and a future reward, must arise from a sense of these duties to our fellow-creatures, as being agreeable to the will of that Almighty power that made us, and has placed us in such particular relations to other men. And without some notions or principles of this kind, I fear the outward abstinence from falsehood and injury, or the mere practice of external beneficence to a neighbour, will go a very little way to obtain the love of God, and future happiness.

Let it be granted then, that honesty and kindness may be much practised by some heathen nations, on the principle of self-preservation, and perhaps it is conveyed from generation to generation, till it has become as much a custom and habit among them as any of their national civilities, their oddities and fooleries, and then they may go on to practise it in the main, because their fathers did it: Let it be granted yet further, that *mere natural temper*, and the animal constitution of flesh and blood may sometimes incline some particular heathens to practise goodness, compassion, hospitality, forgiveness of injuries, meekness and peace, even as the constitution and temper of a sheep is meek and unresenting, in comparison of a dog or a lion: This may be called *natural virtue*, but it is not proper morality nor religion, if the practiser has no regard to the justice and order, the rightness and fitness of things, and the law or will of his Maker; which principles, I believe, can very seldom be found in any of the barbarous nations we speak of.

Suppose it be granted again, *Logisto*, that some few of these rude tribes of mankind are led, by any principles whatsoever to practise honesty, justice, and goodness, yet permit me to observe, that the very notion and obligation of these social virtues is contradicted and destroyed by the professed principle of multitudes of the heathen world. Though plunder in private persons has been generally counted a crime, yet lying, cheating, and stealing, when it has been practised with great dexterity and cunning, has been allowed and commended by the common voice of a nation. The Egyptians were early a civilized nation, yet Aulus Gellius tells us, Book XI. chapter 18. that the old Egyptians held all thefts to be lawful. And Diodorus Siculus mentions a law among them, that

the thief must bring what he stole to the priest, who was to divide the booty, *viz.* one quarter to the thief, and three to the owner. Even the Lacedemonians, who dwelt in Greece, a polite country, publicly encouraged artful thievery; but your clumsey lurchers, that were catched in the fact, were given up to some punishment: And there are few of the unpolished regions of the world where falsehood, lying, and cheating are not practised, by all that are able to do it with impunity.

And even robbery and plunder in great bodies and communities of men has been esteemed a virtue rather than a crime. How many kings and people do we read of in ancient history, how many captains and large armies, who thought it sufficient reason to invade the properties, and destroy the lives of their neighbours, merely to gain a wider dominion, and to make themselves great and rich by the spoils of those that dwelt around them? Reflect a little, whence did the Roman empire rise to its grandeur? Was it not by such public injuries and rapines, robberies, and murders? And who among them questioned the lawfulness of this? Whence sprang the fame of Cæsar, and Alexander, and other barbarous and brutal creatures, that were called heroes? Was it not from this acknowledged principle that they might destroy their fellow-princes and their armies, if they would not pay tribute to them, or might do any mischief to their neighbours, who had done none to them, if they would not submit to their dominion? What are many of the bloody wars that are carried on among the petty princes of Africa and America? Are they owing to any better principle than this, that if they have power enough, they may take occasion to make captives and slaves of their fellow-nations, if they please, in order to sell them to merchants in a way of trade, or to make breakfasts and dinners of them?

Is this that native reason, *Logisto*, which you would teach men to rely upon, without any aids from heaven, for their safe conduct in the paths of virtue, to obtain the favour of God, and eternal felicity? Is this that innate principle, which you would have mankind entirely depend upon, to teach the rules and practices of morality, and justice, and goodness, which is so easily persuaded to let them call vice virtue, and virtue vice? Which suffers whole nations, both kings and people, to be so shamefully led astray into the practice of constant and public villanies, without any remorse or regret? Is this wretched degenerate and perverse power of reasoning fit to be their only guide, while it permits them to work up these public robberies, and murders, and spreading desolations into the notions of honour, virtue, and dignity? But I read your generous conviction in your countenance, and am silent. Let us proceed to the next general head, and pray please to inform us now, whether human reason be sufficient, in a plain and easy manner, to lead the bulk of mankind to find out and discharge their duties toward themselves, in the practice of *temperance and sobriety, with a restraint of their appetites and passions within proper bounds.*

Logisto. Yes, I think that may be done, *Pithander*, in such a manner as this. Appetites and passions may be all reckoned among the powerful natural propensities with which man is endued, in order to preserve his own person and family, to continue his species, to secure himself from evil or injury, and to promote his own ease and happiness. This I might prove by giving instances in a multitude of particulars, if it were needful. It follows, then, that the gratification or indulgence of these passions and appetites is restrained within the bounds of reason, when they neither carry us so far as to do any injury to our neighbours, nor abuse any of our own faculties or powers of body or mind,

but keep them in their proper exercise. Thus, for example, a man may be *lawfully angry* for an injury or affront received from his neighbour, supposing the passion to arise no higher than the demerit of the affront or injury; but if he let it swell and burn to such a degree as to break in upon the peace and property of his neighbour, beyond the reparation of his own damages, and the necessary self-defence against future injuries, he then indulges it to a criminal excess: Or if he suffers the flame to arise so high within him as to discompose his own nature, and to unfit him for his duty toward God, his neighbour, or himself. In the same manner his natural appetites may be indulged so far as to support his nature, or to maintain his species, or to give himself pleasure or ease, in such a manner as does not make an inroad upon the peace or property of the societies in which he dwells, nor unfit his own flesh or spirit for any of the duties of life. But it is evident, that gluttony and drunkenness abuse a man's own natural powers; adultery invades the property and peace of his neighbour; and fornication has an evident tendency to break the peace and welfare of societies, to introduce children into the world under great and necessary hardships and inconveniences, who must either die for want of care, or grow up to shame and sorrow, without due and proper provision for their comfort and happiness.

Pithander. I acknowledge, sir, your reasoning upon this subject has, for the most part, a great deal of truth and justice in it, except in those instances wherein you seem to allow every private person to judge and determine in his own case, about the degree of injury or affront which he has received, and the degree and manner of retaliation or recompence which he demands; which judgment and determination rather belong to the agreement of a whole society, or the sense of a magistrate, upon whom that power is devolved.

But I would not interrupt the course of our dialogue with too many objections, nor divert the current and tendency of it from its main end and design; and therefore I let this pass for the present. Tell me then, sir, with a sincere heart, can you imagine that ever a single creature in the wilds of Africa, and the American forests, could arise to this degree of reason, and to these fine inferences and deductions of the rules of morality, by the dint of his own understanding? The poor wretch that has been trained up from his infancy merely to fish and hunt, to plant a little Indian corn, and to parch it by the fire or the sun, to tie a skin round his body to keep him from the cold, or to dig the trunk of a tree into a hollow canoe for sailing, and who has been employed all his life in some of these low labours and cares; can you ever imagine, that the native reason of such animals as these, can spin out of their own bowels such philosophical discourses, such moral arguments and inferences? And especially, when the design of them is to lay a restraint upon those restless and violent powers of natural appetite and passion? Mistake me not, sir, I do not pronounce it utterly impossible in the nature of things, that reason should exercise itself in this manner; but it appears next to an impossibility, that such sort of moral reasoning should be found in any one hut or wigwam among twenty nations of these American savages.

Logisto. Surely, my friend, you depreciate human nature to a very great degree, and represent it in such colours, as though the glorious light of reason, which shines in every son and daughter of man, had raised them but little above the beasts of the earth, and the birds of the air.

Pithander. If you please, sir, to read the accounts that travellers give us of these

rude and unpolished countries, you will find the constant customs and practices of whole nations perfectly agreeable to the colours in which I represent them. History and matter of fact sufficiently declare human nature, in its present state, to be thus far debased and brutified, and that the glorious faculty of reason is so far overwhelmed and benighted by stupid ignorance, that it seeks not after the God who made them, and it is so wretchedly led captive by passion, appetite, and a thousand objects of sense, as scarce ever to exert itself in any enquiries about the themes of self-denial and mortification, much less to find out all these instances of virtue, or duty toward God or themselves. Besides, sir, please to consider, that passion and appetite are such powerful and ruling springs of judgment, as well as of action, in degenerate mankind, that they disguise and colour the truth as they please, and turn vice into virtue, or evil into good, by the vivacity and force of their representation. The faculty of fancy is almost always engaged on their side, and that helps to throw false colours on things, and leads the untaught and unwary reasoner into a thousand errors. The violence of hope and fear, of desire and aversion, of love and wrath, persuade and almost compel the reason of an Iroquois, or a Negroe, a Hottentot, or a Laplander, to determine every thing to be right or wrong according as these passions represent it. And since it is so hard for European philosophers, and even for christians, to judge aright by their own reason in particular cases, wherein appetite and passion are concerned, much harder is it, and almost impossible, for these savages of America or Africa, &c. to frame to themselves a scheme of virtue in these self-denying instances. You, yourself, sir, have granted the truth of what our friend Sophronius expressed in the end of his discourse, *viz.* that all men every where will frequently find themselves betrayed into sin by the strength of appetites and passions: And how perpetually will these wild creatures be thus exposed to sin against God, when their reason has yielded itself such a captive to sense, as not to enquire and settle the rules of duty? Let us proceed then, sir, to the last article, which I shall desire you to prove, or rather to shew me, how an untaught heathen *shall be convinced that he is a sinner against God;* and, when convinced, what he should do to *appease God's anger;* and if he should repent of sin, *how shall he know that God will forgive him* upon his repentance, and receive him into his favour?

Logisto. First, I cannot think it such a difficulty to convince human creatures that they have some way or other *done what they should not do*, or *neglected what they ought to do* with regard to God, or to their neighbours, or themselves: And thus reason is sufficient for conviction of sin; for it is sufficient to enable them to compare their actions with the rectitude of the nature of God, and with the general rules of their duty which they know, and to observe how much they have wandered from them.

Pithander. I grant it no hard matter, sir, when they are once led into an acquaintance with the rectitude of God's nature, and are brought to the knowledge of their own various duties, to make them sensible that they come very short in the performance of them: And I cannot but think, that reason and conscience do sometimes convince Negroes and Hottentots of some crimes. But reason, as it operates in those wild creatures, shews them so very little of the holy nature of God, of their relations to him, and of their duty toward God or man, as you have found in this dispute, that it plainly follows, that this same reason of theirs will go but a very little way in making them sensible of any failures in their duty. How shall they be convinced they sin against God, *in forgetting him* from day to day, and from year to year, in *neglecting to reverence him* for his great-

ness, *to praise him* for his goodness, or *to pray to him* and *depend on him* for his further blessing, when their whole nation has continued in this constant course of impiety from age to age, without remorse? when none of them have been ever led so far by their own reason, as to know these duties, and bind them upon their own consciences? And suppose they should be made sensible, that they have now and then cheated their neighbours by lying and falsehood, that they have plundered or stole their goods from them, or that they have been sometimes shamefully drunk, or guilty of fornication; yet their consciences will bring but a very feeble charge against them for these things as criminal, if they have not been evidently convinced, that *truth and justice, chastity and temperance* were necessary duties.

And yet further, *Logisto*, be pleased to consider, that if they should be never so much convinced that they have done amiss in drinking to excess, because it injures themselves, or in doing any kind of injury to their neighbour; yet they would not readily conclude, that they did any injury to God hereby; since their reason has not yet led them to the thought, that God is the great Inspector and Governor of the world, and that he has in any way and manner forbid these sins, or required the contrary duties. Nor is it any wonder, that a rude American should justify himself and his conduct from any dishonours done to God, though he has forgot and neglected him all his life, and has wallowed in lewd and drunken debaucheries, unless he has also been guilty of some most flagrant acts of impiety, injustice, and villany. Such very flagrant and notorious crimes, perhaps, might recoil upon his conscience, and smite him with conviction. But as for the multitudes of common sins, a wild savage in the African or American regions would take no notice of them, but think himself and his neighbours good and innocent enough. Nor is this at all strange, since the rude herd of mankind, even amongst christians, are ready to say, when a neighbour dies; "Alas, poor man! he is gone: but surely he is gone to heaven; for though he did not mind much of religion indeed, yet he was an honest creature, he would not wrong a man of a farthing, and he was ever ready to do his neighbour a kindness: It is true, he would drink now and then a little too much, nor was he always so careful to speak truth, and perhaps he would swear when he was in a passion, but never when he was sober; he was no man's enemy but his own, and did no injury but to himself." Now if this gross ignorance, and senselessness of sin, be found even in the lands of christian knowledge, we may easily suppose the poor savages will hardly think themselves sinners against God at all.

Logisto. I own what you say, *Pithander*, has some weight in it; though you must acknowledge too, that there are certainly some secret workings of conscience in all men, which give them some inward notices, when they violate the rule of their duty, especially in grosser instances, and smite them with an inward reproach, though it may not be so frequent, nor in so explicit a manner, as I was ready to imagine, before we had talked over this matter so particularly.

Pithander. I have granted it, sir; and it is very likely, at some seasons of grosser transgression, or when their natural spirits are low, they may feel such inward reproaches of conscience more plain and pungent: But having no fixed and settled rules of duty, these little uneasinesses quickly vanish, like a qualm of sickness that passes over the stomach; they forget their own iniquities, and they are prone to fancy, that God forgets them too: And thus they go on again to their old barbarity and injustice, their gluttony

and drunkenness. I grant, this conduct is greatly criminal, yet it is the common case, till, by degrees, conscience grows callous and insensible, and they sin without remorse.

LOGISTO. I confess, when we observe so little of the workings of conscience in men, to convince them of sin, in such a knowing and rational land and age as ours, when we observe how much the voice of conscience is neglected, and how easily it is silenced, when we find it grows hard and stupid by degrees, and at last permits men, without any remorse, to commit all villanies, in spite of all the remonstrances of God and man, it is no wonder that conscience has a very feeble influence in such wild and unknowing, and unpolished countries, where irreligion and intemperance are the custom and fashion, from generation to generation.

PITHANDER. Well then, sir, since you allow me this, please to proceed, and inform me, how they shall come to know, if they should be once convinced of sin, *that they must repent of it;* that is, be sorry for it, *and abstain from it?*

LOGISTO. This repentance is the most natural and obvious practice that the reason of man can dictate to him, to appease an offended God: It is going as far as he can, to undo what evil he hath done; and therefore the reason of every man would conduct him to penitence under a sense of past sin.

PITHANDER. But we do not find this duty towards God has been so constantly taught, or practised so very much by human reason, even among the philosophers and the inhabitants of Rome or Athens, as to imagine that the Indian savages should prescribe this duty to themselves. Though here and there a wise man might mention repentance as a duty, yet it is evident the polite nations of heathenism were generally *for offering sacrifices* of one kind or other, *to make compensation for their crimes*, without much solicitude or care about repentance as a duty to God, and a watchful care of better obedience. And in those parts of America where they made pretences to any sense of religion, it was a frequent thing, as the Spanish writers of the country of Mexico inform us, to seek out some beautiful girl, and offer her a sacrifice to their offended idols, when they thought their gods were angry with them: Penitence and reformation, virtue, and piety of heart and life, are little thought of among wild heathens as the means of obtaining divine pardon, or as necessary for that end.

LOGISTO. I confess, my friend, you put me in mind of many histories which I have read, not only of heathen, but of popish countries, where the doctrine and practice of *penances, and sacrifices,* and *rich offerings* to saints and idols, gods and goddesses, are the immediate remedy to which men apply themselves after sin, and which papists and heathens make their ready refuge, after a sense of guilt, rather than to practise the inward and spiritual duties of repentance and mortification, and maintain a future course of watchful holiness.

PITHANDER. Let us drop this point then, sir; and now I entreat you to prove, that if a heathen should truly repent, and be sorry for his sin, even as it is committed against God, and should endeavour to perform his duty better for time to come, will his reason assure him, that God will forgive his sin, receive him to his favour, and make him happy?

LOGISTO. Yes, certainly, *Pithander*, he need not doubt it; for if doing evil be the only foundation of God's displeasure, *ceasing to do evil*, or *returning to do well*, must take away that displeasure. God is too good a being, not to approve and forgive such a

penitent. And not only the goodness, but even the wisdom of God would oblige him to forgive those who repent, since the sinner then becomes what God in his wisdom requires him to be: Whereas if God punished him, it could only be with a design to correct him, and make him pious and virtuous for time to come: But when this happy end is attained without punishment, there is then no need of it: And God has no cruelty in his nature, to incline him to punish a creature without necessity.

Pithander. To this I answer, That the correction or amendment of the particular offender, is not the only end of punishment, but *the vindication of the wisdom and justice of the lawgiver, and his law,* which are like to be insulted, and the laws continually broken afresh, if offences were always passed by with impunity, and if the criminal were always pardoned upon repentance. It is necessary for a governor sometimes to teach his subjects what an evil thing it is to transgress his law, by the proper punishment of those who offend. The honour and authority of government must be sometimes supported and vindicated by such severities: And though it may please a sovereign sometimes to pardon an offender out of his great goodness, when he is truly penitent for his crime, yet no degrees of penitence can assure the offender that he shall certainly and entirely be forgiven, or can claim forgiveness at the hands of the sovereign; because repentance makes no recompence at all for the dishonour done to the authority of the law, and of him that made it. His future obedience is all due, if he had never sinned; and therefore it cannot compensate for past neglects and transgressions.

Logisto. But when sinful man is truly penitent for his faults, it is the best thing that a creature can do in sinful circumstances, and the best recompence that he can make to an offended God, who is a righteous and merciful Governor, and will require no more than a sinner can give.

Pithander. But a sinner can *dare pœnas,* suffer punishment, to make a sort of compensation, by forfeiting and losing his peace, and thus doing honour to the law in a passive manner, when he would not do it by active obedience. Suppose, sir, if I dare suppose a thing almost impossible, that so worthy a gentleman, and so loyal a subject as *Logisto,* should rebel against his present Majesty King George the Second, should murder a fellow-subject, or violate any of the laws of the land by a capital crime, and after he had continued some time in a vicious course, he should repent, and assure his majesty, that for time to come he would be a very faithful subject, has he sufficient ground to claim or to expect a pardon, merely because he is sorry for what he has done, and resolved sincerely to do so no more? King George is indeed a man of mercy, but would that repentance of yours be any reparation for the injury you have done to the authority of the king, or the welfare of the state? Do you not know, sir, that the government takes no cognizance of such repentances? Even the most sincere penitent cannot claim a right to have his treason pardoned. Government requires that criminals *be punished* to maintain the authority of the law and the lawgivers: The life of the criminal is forfeited and due to the state: Criminals must be made examples of justice, that the honour of government may be maintained, and that other subjects, who see or hear of this punishment, may be secured in their obedience and duty, by such public examples of punishment and terror.

Now to apply this to the case in hand: The great God sufficiently makes it appear, in the conduct of his providence, and in his government of the world, that he does not punish offending creatures merely to promote their own correction, repentance, and

reformation. How many thousands of sinful men are cut off by earthquakes, famine, pestilence, inundations, &c. and sent down to the grave, where there is no reformation or repentance? How many sinners, who have been already truly penitent and reformed, have borne these desolating testimonies of the displeasure of God against sin, and felt a heavy share of these public calamities? Nay, have there not been some of the most virtuous and holy creatures upon earth now and then given up by the providence of God, not only to common calamities, but to peculiar miseries and smarting sorrows, as just tokens of divine resentment for some past sins? And their own consciences have acknowledged the justice of it. *God will magnify his law and make it honourable*, and will make even penitent sinners know *what an evil and bitter thing it is* to offend his majesty, and break his laws. And as it has pleased the righteous Governor of the universe to make even penitent offenders sometimes instances of his just displeasure against sin in this world, that other inhabitants of the earth may see, and fear, and obey, so how do we know, how far the several orders of angels or inhabitants of other worlds, shall be witnesses of the punishment of guilty mortals in the invisible or future state, and be thereby deterred from sin? The repentance of a criminal is no recompence to God, considered as the universal Governor of his intellectual creatures: His supreme authority must be maintained, and his honour be vindicated, through his universal empire: And how can heathens assure themselves, by the mere light of reason, that the wisdom of his government doth not find it necessary to make all the criminals of the human race become some way or other examples of his just resentment? It is only divine revelation that informs us with any certainty, that man shall find *forgiveness with God*, and that pardon shall follow repentance.

Logisto. Do you not allow then, my friend, that the light of nature can go so far as to say, it is at least *probable*, that God will forgive a repenting sinner, though reason may not make it certain?

Pithander. I confess, some things which *Sophronius* delivered concerning the hope of pardon for repenting sinners, in confirmation of his scheme of natural religion, at the beginning of this conference, have great weight with me. Though I am sure repentance cannot *claim* pardon on the sinner's part at the hand of God, yet I know not how strong a claim the wisdom and mercy of God may bring against the full execution of justice in such a case. God may forgive a sinner in part, and release him, in some degree, from the complete demerit and punishment of his sin, though he does not forgive him entirely. The learned Dr. Clarke, though he makes but little of original sin, yet in Vol. II. Sermon IX. p. 198, he says, *We are the posterity of a sinful parent, and ourselves also are actual sinners; and at best we are but very imperfect and undeserving penitents, and our utmost endeavours of repentance can at most but afford ground of hope for the abatement of punishment, and not any expectation of reward.*

But let us suppose and allow, that it is probable God will at last forgive an humble penitent creature that has offended against him in time past, if he earnestly implore divine forgiveness, if he grow up to a settled hatred of his iniquity, and behave himself with all watchfulness in the practice of his duty for time to come, both toward God, toward his neighbour, and himself. I think I must believe, that God loves holiness so well, that he will not for ever punish a creature that repents sincerely, and that he cannot but love a creature which sincerely loves God; and therefore, if among sinful rebels he

should find any such remarkable penitent in the savage regions of the earth, I grant he shall not finally and eternally be banished from the presence of his Maker into misery, or at least he may have very encouraging hopes of some favour and acceptance at last, if he can and will exercise his reason so far upon these subjects and enquiries.

Logisto. I am glad *Sophronius* is here in this dispute, and I am well pleased to see *Pithander* not only ready to yield to conviction at first, upon the appearance of the light of reason, but to retain it through all our conference.

Pithander. But there are still some considerable difficulties remaining, sir, upon this point; there is some darkness hangs about this gleam of light. Suppose a heathen should be brought to believe and hope, that God may forgive his *past sins* upon sincere repentance, his renewed obedience, and his humble addresses to him for that purpose, yet can his reason teach him, that God will forgive *daily and repeated sins*, after knowledge and vows of obedience? That he will forgive the same sinner relapsing a hundred times over? That he will forgive his sins, even to the end of his life? Or that he will forgive him entirely and perfectly, so as to make him undergo no penalty at all, and pass through no purgatory in the other world, to make some degree of expiation for past offences? This doctrine of a painful purification in another state was supposed by some of the ancient heathens, and is still believed by one party of christians, whereby souls of imperfect virtue do penance for the crimes committed in this life. Can his reason tell him, how long this state of penance and purgation will endure? Can it assure him, that God will take the sinner into his favour, so far as to give him a lasting state of happiness hereafter, who has been such a vile criminal here? And, I was going to say, can his reason assure him, since his best repentance is so very imperfect, that he shall not be put upon *another* state of trial in a future world, and that his soul shall not be sent to animate any other body, partly to punish him for his crimes in this, and partly to go through a new probation, with regard to some further state of happiness or misery? And not only one, but all these doubts will grow much stronger, if the repentance itself be doubtful and feeble, or much interrupted by returning sins.

I am sure, *Logisto*, you are a gentleman of greater reading, than to imagine these are mere fancies of my own: Your acquaintance with the heathen writers informs you of their *purgatory:* Plato expressly declares, that those "who seem to have lived a middle sort of life, that is, with some virtues and some vices, go into the lake of Acheron, and being cleansed and punished are then dismissed, and receive the recompence of their well-doings." See his Phædo. And you know, sir, their doctrine of transmigration of souls, which is said to be derived originally from Pythagoras the philosopher, and has spread widely among the nations. The poets borrowed their representations from the philosophers, though they have dressed them with ornaments peculiar to their own genius. Virgil sends Æneas into the other world, and there he finds, in or near the Elysian fields, several souls who were ordained to return to other bodies:

> "Inclusas animas, superumq; ad lumen ituras,
> And—Animæ quibus altera fato
> Corpora debentur——"

And the souls even of the best men, before they are admitted to Elysium, or the state of the blessed, must go through fire and water, and various pains and purifications.

Logisto. I keep a few of the classics here in this summer-house, and some polite writings for my diversion. Here is a good edition of Virgil; come, turn to the place, and let us see the lines.

Pithander. With all my heart, sir; it is in Book VI. toward the end, verse 735.

" Quin et supremo cum lumine vita reliquit,
Non tamen omne malum miseris, nec funditus omnes
Corporeæ exeedunt pestes.———
Ergo exercentur pœnis, veterumq; malorum
Supplicia expendunt: aliæ panduntur inanes
Suspensæ ad ventos: aliis sub gurgite vasto
Infectum eluitur scelus, aut exuritur igni,
Quisque suos patimur manes. Exinde per amplum
Mittimur Elysium, et pauci læta arva tenemus."

Logisto. I find after their purgatory, Virgil allows but a few of them to be happy, so great and universal does he suppose their defilement in this mortal state. But as for the bulk and multitude of these departed souls, pray what becomes of them?

Pithander. Surely, sir, you have read the following lines, where he teaches us, that they return to bodies again after a thousand years penance:

" Donec longa dies perfecto temporis orbe
Concretam exemit labem, purumque reliquit
Æthereum sensum, atque auraï simplicis ignem.
Has omnes, ubi mille rotam volvere per annos,
Lethæum ad fluvium deus evocat agmine magno:
Scilicet immemores, supera ut convexa revisant
Rursus, et incipiant in corpora velle reverti."

Logisto. Since we are got into the company of the muses, *Pithander*, let us see what our English Virgil, Mr. Dryden, says, in his translation of this period. I will read them to you:

Not death itself can wholly wash their stains,
But long contracted filth ev'n in the soul remains.
The relics of inveterate vice they wear;
And spots of sin obscene in every face appear.
For this are various penances enjoined;
And some are hung to bleach upon the wind;
Some plung'd in waters, others purg'd in fires,
Till all the dregs are drain'd, and all the rust expires:
All have their manes, and those manes bear:
The few, so cleans'd, to these abodes repair,
And breathe, in ample fields, the soft Elysian air.
Then are they happy, when by length of time
The scurf is worn away of each committed crime.
No speck is left of their habitual stains;
But the pure æther of the soul remains.
But, when a thousand rolling years are past,
(So long their punishments and penance last;)
Whole droves of minds are, by the driving god,
Compell'd to drink the deep Lethæan flood:
In large forgetful draughts to steep the cares
Of their past labours, and their irksome years;
That, unremember'ring of its former pain,
The soul may suffer mortal flesh again.

Pithander. And it is the doctrine of Pythagoras, as represented to us by another of

the poets, that human souls return into the bodies of beasts, as well as men. Ovid informs us so in the fifteenth book of his "Metamorphoses." Have you got it here?

Logisto. Yes, sir, Ovid is at hand, and as vain and fabulous a writer as he was in ancient times, yet if his soul was transmigrated into any human form in this age, I am persuaded he would be wonderfully pleased to be found in such company as yours, gentlemen, and to hear himself called upon to give his sense of the doctrine of Pythagoras, since it puts a sort of philosophical air and dress on his wild stories of the transformation of gods and men.

Pithander. See here then, sir, the opinion of that ancient philosopher in the language of poesy:

"Morte carent animæ, semperque priore relicta
Sede, novis domibus vivunt, habitantque receptæ;
Omnia mutantur: nihil interit: errat et illinc
Huc venit; hinc illuc; quoslibet occupat artus
Spiritus; eque feris humana in corpora transit,
Inquæ feras noster."

Which Mr. Dryden thus translates:

"Then death, so call'd, is but old matter dress'd
In some new figure, and a vary'd vest:
Thus all things are but alter'd, nothing dies;
And here, and there, th' unbody'd spirit flies.
By time, or force, or sickness dispossess'd,
And lodges, where it lights, in man or beast,
Or hunts without, till ready limbs it find,
And actuates those according to their kind;
From tenement to tenement is toss'd,
The soul is still the same, the figure only lost."

And Lucan says of the Northern countries, Lib. I. Phars. that they had the opinion of transmigration of souls, and therefore they feared not death:

"———Populi quos despicit arctos
Felices errore suo, quos ille timorum
Maximus, haud urget leti metus."

And on this account they esteemed it a very cowardly thing in war,

"———Redituræ parcere vitæ,"

that is, to be fond of this life, or solicitous to save it, when it would be so soon restored again. Cæsar tells us this was the doctrine of the Druids, our ancestors, in Britain: *Disciplina Druidum in Britannia reperta——imprimis hoc volunt persuadere, non interire animas; sed ab aliis post mortem transire ad alios, &c.* Lib. VI. *De Bello Gall.* "The doctrine of the Druids was found in Britain. This is one of the prime articles of it, that souls do not die; but after the death of the body they pass from one to another." The ancient Brachmans were known to be professors and teachers of this opinion; and in the country of Malabar, in the East Indies, their successors, the Bramins, teach the people the same notion still; and especially, that the souls of men, who have behaved ill in this world, are sent at their death into brute animals, partly to make atonement for sins past, and partly for a new trial. Now, sir, if those among the ancient heathens, in various nations of Europe and Asia, who professed to be wise above their neighbours, and who endeavoured to use their reason in matters of religion and a future state, were

led into such wild errors, and had so little certainty about pardon of sin, and future rewards or punishments, what hope can you have, that untaught reason, in the wilds of America, and in African deserts, should have better success in their roving and loose enquiries about religious affairs, and the future state of men?

Logisto. I know not well what to reply to some of these doubts and queries of yours. Upon the whole, I do not see how the mere reason of man, without any assistance, can get through all these difficulties, so as to assure a sinner of certain restoration to divine favour, and the enjoyment of immortal blessedness at death, upon such poor, sorry, and interrupted repentances as will be found among these heathens: And I am now ready to think, that some of my infidel acquaintance talk with too much assurance and triumph upon these subjects, because they never entered far enough into enquiries about them, to learn the difficulties with which their opinions are surrounded. We are too ready to think the great God a mere weak, good-natured thing, such as some magistrates have been in wicked nations, and that he utterly neglects to lay due restraints upon the vices of his subjects, that he disregards the demands of justice, and the rights of government. If I mistake not, your Hebrew poet introduces God himself making this reflection upon some of the loose and profligate fellows of that age, who were not willing to have vice too severely punished; *Thou thoughtest I was altogether such a one as thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set thy sins in order before thine eyes;* Psalm l. 21.

Pithander. Dear sir, since you have done David the honour to cite him in our debates, I beg leave to repeat the awful address he makes to those vicious creatures in the very next words: *Consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.* Punishment belongs to guilt, and God, the governor of the world, has a right to inflict it if he please. I grant, these persons of whom the Psalmist here speaks, were impenitent sinners: But there are many passages in scripture that concur with our natural reason, and inform us that God may, and sometimes doth, punish in some degree those favourites whom he finally pardons. In *Psalm* xcix. 8. David says, *Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions.* Nor can all the light of reason assure us, that God will entirely forgive a penitent in this world or in the other, without some punishment.

Logisto. I would readily yield, *Pithander*, as far as your argument carries evidence with it. But though we cannot be fully assured, that repenting criminals shall be completely pardoned, yet you have granted there is very probable ground for a penitent to hope, that God will forgive him at last; and if reason can lead him but to a probability of this final forgiveness, it gives sufficient ground for the practice of repentance and future obedience, though there may be some sore punishments in his way to final happiness.

Pithander. Please to consider, dear sir, that though I have allowed that the force of reason, under happy advantages and improvements, and in its best exercises, may reach thus far, yet when the reason or conscience of a poor untaught African savage has been by any providence so far awakened, as to think himself a criminal before God, and has his soul made deeply sensible of sin, I hardly see how he can, upon just and solid grounds, get through all the difficulties which I have mentioned. Will his own rude and uninstructed reason tell him, that God will probably forgive him a hundred times over? That God will call him to no pains and sufferings in a future state, on account of his sins in this life? Or if he endures some pain, can his reason teach him, that God will probably take him afterward into his favour, so far as to give an immortal reward to any of his

poor pretences to virtue, which are so often interrupted and defiled by sin? And whatever inferences you and I may be able to make in Great-Britain, I doubt the skill of a negro on this theme.

Logisto. I am sensible I have been too confident upon these matters: and I begin to think there is some need of a *revelation* to give men more clear discoveries of true religion, and more evident, substantial, and encouraging hopes of the pardon of sin and eternal happiness. But however, my friend, you seem at present to have got the better of me, by running over all the particular articles which *Sophronius* has mentioned, as belonging to natural religion, and I confess I cannot see how a wild negro, or an American, can so well find them out as I imagined: yet I cannot but think still, that human reason must or should have sufficient ability to guide and to conduct mankind to the favour of God, and happiness in a way of religion; and I have something further to offer upon this head: And when I lead the argument, and cast it into another form, we shall try whether your skill can refute it.

Pithander. Let your arguments be proposed, sir, in what new form you please, I think I shall be able to shew you their weakness, or if they are convincing, I desire to be so honest as to yield to their force. But the hours are passed away, sir, with uncommon speed in such an agreeable conversation: The sun hath been set almost this half hour: I think it was full moon yesterday, and we shall have the light of that planet to guide us home in a little time, which is far more than the American savages have to guide them to heaven, or the African tribe of negroes to relieve their midnight darkness. If you please, *Logisto*, we will agree and meet here to-morrow evening, and carry on the discourse. But let us have *Sophronius*'s impartial sentiments on our debate thus far, before we break up.

Logisto. With all my heart, gentlemen, and I shall be very glad to see you both here to-morrow on so agreeable an occasion: And now I entreat you, *Sophronius*, to make use of no compliments, but fulfil the office of an impartial moderator, for which we both chose you; for our business is the search of truth.

Sophronius. Gentlemen, I have been a careful hearer of your free and learned debate, and I cannot but observe with pleasure, that you have avoided all the little paltry methods of cavilling, into which disputants are too often betrayed when *they aim at victory more than truth*, and when each person is resolved to maintain his own opinion at all adventures. By this happy temper and conduct which has appeared in this conference, I am in no pain about giving you my freest thoughts on the subject, since I am in no danger of displeasing persons of your generous sentiments. Give me leave then, in the first place, to take notice, that you have confined the greatest part of your discourse to the sufficiency of human reason, in the rude and uncultivated nations of Africa and North America, to lead them to the favour of God and happiness, by the knowledge and practice of religion: And indeed, I cannot but think you have wisely fixed this scene for your controversy, and limited your discourse to this sort of people, which are some of the most barbarous and brutish on the earth, and where reason has no supposed assistances from revelation. *Logisto* has taken great pains to prove, that human reason, even in such savage nations as these, is sufficient to guide and conduct them in the way of religion to the favour of God, and future happiness; or else indeed the proposition is not universally true, *That the reason of all men is sufficient for this purpose;* and in my opinion, he has gone a great way toward proving the natural sufficiency of human reason for this purpose,

by shewing how rational every article of natural religion appears, and by what natural and just steps of inference it may be derived from such principles as lie within the reach of mankind, and his reasoning powers. On the other hand, *Pithander* has shewn us plainly in fact, how unassisted reason is turned aside perpetually from the truth, and that these several nations, in many successive ages, have been born, and lived, and died, by thousands and ten thousands, and have never sought nor found out any tolerable scheme of natural religion, and hardly done any thing toward it; not that he supposes them to be innocent and blameless in these shameful neglects of God, and aversions to true religion; but it is so in fact from age to age, and there are many evident causes or occasions of it.

Give me leave, *Logisto*, to sum up in one view the various considerations that *Pithander* has intimated in several parts of this debate, why he thinks human reason in these savages to be insufficient to lead them to true religion.—1. He considers the early and *inveterate prejudices* of whole nations against the principles and rules of true religion, the obstinate and deep-rooted *prepossessions* which they labour under, and the gross and shameful *errors* which they are led into from their youngest infancy by all who are about them: And their crime is, that there is scarce a soul of them that ever bethinks himself so far, as to question the truth of what his parents and neighbours have taught him in his childhood, let it be never be so much contrary to reason and virtue.—2. He considers their irreligious customs, and the vicious practices, which run through the whole nation; which national customs are held so sacred in their esteem, that it is a sufficient proof of truth or duty to them to say, *It is the constant opinion or custom of their country*. Every thing that their ancestors have believed or done is reasonable in their account, without any examination.—3. He considers the natural thoughtlessness of these creatures, about any thing that is spiritual and divine, without some hint given them that should set their reason at work: They eat and drink, and lie down and rise whole years together, and never think of the true God and the honours due to him, if some peculiar providence, occurrence, or conversation doth not turn their thoughts this way. And to this we might add, their general astonishing stupidity in matters of God and godliness, if ever they hear any discourse of them: their aversion to the spiritual parts of religion, and utter disregard of every thing that belongs to it.—4. He considers the weakness of their untaught reason, to distinguish truth from error, if ever it were set a working on spiritual things. Reason, as well as our other powers, learns to exercise itself by practice and instruction; and without instruction it is very rude and giddy, and ever wandering into folly and madness. These rude and barbarous creatures, therefore, must not only be put into a right track of thought at first, but be kept in it too; or otherwise they presently run into gross mistakes, even in the plainest and commonest principles of religion, such as *the existence and unity of God*, and *the worship that ought to be paid to him*, and the common virtues of *justice and sobriety*. Such poor savages as these, if their faces were once set toward religion and truth, would be readily led away into a variety of errors which stand thick on every side, unless they had some other guide, some better clue and direction than their own reasoning powers.—5. He considers the incessant and everlasting influence of *sensible things* upon their minds, which continually, though unreasonably, divert them from a right exercise of their reason about matters of religion and virtue. The urgent *necessities of nature*, the constant return of *their appetites*, the solicitude and care to supply them, and the frequent rise and efforts of their *unruly passions*, all join

together, not only to hinder the better powers of their nature from engaging closely in the pursuit of religion, but also tend to blind their minds, and lead them astray from the truth. They are criminal indeed, in indulging these inferior powers to the neglect of their souls and their best interest; but still they do universally indulge them. And I might add, in the last place, he has intimated, that if they feel any efforts of their own reason toward the searching out of the true God and his worship, if they are awakened by the inward dictates or reproofs of conscience now and then, to make some resistance to their brutal customs, and ungodly practices; yet these inward efforts of conscience and reason are so feeble, that they suffer them to be quickly overpowered and extinguished by the temptations that stand around them within and without.

Pithander. I own my great obligations to you, *Sophronius*, for so happy a recollection of my scattered thoughts, and so beautiful a disposition of them, as gives force, perspicuity, and elegance to my argument.

Sophronius. Sir, I have done nothing but my duty in summing up the evidence, before I pronounce the sentence. Had there been any thing in *Logisto*'s part of the conference which had needed such a rehearsal and new disposition, he might be assured I should not have failed either in my diligence or readiness to assist or set forth his argument to as good advantage. But, compliments apart: Thus, gentlemen, having briefly recapitulated the debate between you, all that I shall say, by way of an arbitrator in the present dispute, shall be contained in a few following propositions: Perhaps I shall not be able to place them in so just and regular a form: But I can trust your candour: Conversation does not require such exactness. And I would particularly bespeak *Logisto*'s pardon, before I mention the two first of them, because they suppose the truth of christianity and the Bible, which he seems to doubt of at present. But he shall find that I name them only to introduce the rest, and that I shall make no manner of use of these two propositions against his present argument, or in favour of *Pithander*. I proceed therefore:

I. I am persuaded, that God never did or will forgive the sins of any man upon earth, whether Jew, heathen, or christian, nor receive any of our sinful race into his favour, *but upon the account of what Jesus Christ his Son, the Mediator, has done and suffered, for the atonement or expiation of sin, and the recovery of man to the favour of God:* So that if heathens are saved, I think it is owing to the merit of Christ and his death. *There is salvation in no other, nor is there any other name whereby men may be saved.* If any of those who never heard of Christ might be saved without the influence of his atonement and mediation, why might not they that have heard of him be saved without it also? Thus there would be no need of him to become a Mediator, or to make atonement for the sins of the one or the other; and thus Christ would have lived and died to very little purpose.

II. With most sincere esteem and love, and shall I add, with tender compassion to *Logisto*, I ask leave to declare my belief of the constitution of the gospel, with all the solemn threatenings that are annexed to it, which I would call my second proposition; *viz. He that lives where the gospel of Christ is published, with its proper and necessary evidences, and yet refuses all his lifetime to believe and receive it, cannot be saved; but lies under that sentence of condemnation which is frequently denounced in the New Testament, He that believeth not, shall be damned: If ye believe not that I am he*, that is, the Messiah, *ye shall die in your sins.* Nor would the blessed God ever denounce such terrible sen-

tences as these for mere errors of the mind, without any vice of the will. God well knows where he has given sufficient light and evidence; and he also knows, that however an honest and sincere mind may happen to be led astray for a season, yet nothing but criminal negligence, or culpable prejudices, or some sinful aversion to the gospel, can influence men, under such evidences, constantly and finally to reject it: It is plain to me, even from these scriptures, that no man who truly fears and loves God, and seeks to know or to do his will, can or will be guilty of constant and final opposition to the gospel, where it is surrounded with its proper attestations. And upon this account, dear *Logisto*, I am persuaded, your sincere enquiries to find out the true religion will issue in a hearty belief and profession of christianity, though your thoughts may be at present fluttering abroad with some uncertainty where to fix.

Logisto. I cannot withhold myself, gentlemen, from interrupting our moderator in his discourse, that I may make my acknowledgments for his tender concern about my best interests, which he has expressed in so affectionate and respectful a manner. I must confess, I have no obstinate and rooted aversion to the christian religion, if I can find that there is any real need of it, and that it stands upon solid foundations, and if I could answer some few difficulties that belong to the Bible. But lest I make too long an interruption of your discourse, I intreat you, *Sophronius*, proceed to your third proposition.

Sophronius. III. Though I suppose no man shall be saved but by virtue of the mediation and death of Christ, nor doth the gospel permit me to allow salvation to those who wilfully and finally reject it, under clear light and evidence; yet there is good reason to believe, that there have been many sinners actually saved, who never believed in Jesus Christ the Son of Mary, nor ever heard of his name, nor had any notion of his atoning death and sacrifice. Such were some of the early descendants of Noah, who lived long before this name was known in the world, among whom we may reckon Abimelech king of the Philistines, Melchisedec king of Salem, Job in the land of Uz,* with his four friends, and many others, who *feared God and wrought righteousness:* And such were many good men among the Jews, who might be made partakers of the benefits of the death of Christ and his sacrifice, though they had generally no notion of such a sort of Messiah, or Saviour, as was to be made a sacrifice for the sins of men: Nor is this at all incredible, since St. Peter himself, who had been a disciple of Christ so long, did not believe this doctrine even a little before his Master's death, when he complimented his Master concerning his crucifixion; *Matt.* xvi. 22. and said, *Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee.* See p. 325.

Nor is it unreasonable to have the same charitable thoughts concerning several other persons of the heathen world, during the continuance of the Jewish church and state, who had either maintained the knowledge of the true God, by tradition from Noah, or recovered it by converse with the Jews, and worshipped him as a God of justice and mercy, with fear and hope? Such was Cornelius the centurion, and Lydia, and several

* Some will object here, did not Job believe in Jesus Christ, his Redeemer, who shall stand at last on the earth; *Job* xix. 24, &c.? Answer. It is granted, that in some bright hours, and particularly in the text cited, he was carried by inspiration above the level of the dispensation under which he lived, so far as plainly to rejoice in this glorious Saviour of mankind, even the same person who was afterward manifested in the world under the name of Jesus Christ: And so might several other pious men under the ancient dispensations, and perhaps many or most of them might hope for some such Saviour: but it can scarce be proved, that all of them had an explicit notion of such a glorious Messiah, and that they actually trusted in him as a Mediator; much less does it appear, that they all trusted in him as an atoning sacrifice, though they might wait and hope for him, as some future deliverer.

others, who were called *devout persons, and such as feared or worshipped God*, in the history of the *Acts*, chap. x. 2, 7. and xvi. 14. and xvii. 4. And it is possible, that since the first age of christianity there may have been some such religious persons, of this same character, who were saved, though they never heard the doctrine of Jesus Christ; for if they had so much religion as would have saved them before that time, surely they shall never be excluded from salvation for want of hearing of the doctrine of Christ, if they did not lie within the reach of it.

IV. If any persons in the heathen nations are saved without the actual knowledge of Christ, or any divine revelation, I think I may venture to say, that they can obtain it no other way but by the knowledge and sincere belief, and practice of that religion whose articles I enumerated, at your request, in the beginning of your dispute: And I then gave you my reasons why I think these articles are sufficient, and why they are necessary: I told you then, why I conceive that a good and gracious God will finally accept of the soul who sincerely believes and practises them; and why I can hardly suppose a holy and righteous God will accept of any thing that comes very much short of these articles.

V. Since all these articles of natural religion, which I before mentioned, arise from the mere consideration of the nature of God, and man in his present state, and the relations in which man stands to God, and to his fellow-creatures, and since they stand so connected together, that they may be, and have been actually drawn out and framed by the exercise of our reasoning powers, by persons who dwell under the light of christianity, then it is not utterly impossible, in the nature of things, that the same articles should be drawn out and framed by the exercise of reason, among those who never enjoyed the preaching of the gospel of Christ; though it must be confessed it is almost infinitely easier for a christian to do it, than for a heathen. Yet still it is possible, in the nature of things, that mere human reason may be so cultivated and improved, without revelation, as to produce such fruits of knowledge as these are. This appears in some measure, by the fine schemes and thoughts of some of the Greek and Roman philosophers, on the themes of rational, mathematical, physical, and moral knowledge, as well as in some parts of religion, and by the great progress a few of them have made in knowledge and truth, on some of the subjects which you have been debating. I confess indeed, I hardly think those polite writers and philosophers would have gone so far in virtue and religion, if they had borrowed no help from divine tradition, and converse with the Jews, or their neighbours. But after all, I cannot say that such a scheme of religion as I have here proposed, lies utterly out of the reach of human reason, in the nature of things, since the several steps of it may be all connected by strong inferences.

VI. Though there be several whole nations of the earth sunk into such a brutal stupidity, as the savages in the deserts of Africa, and the wilds of America, that they know nothing of religion; and though scarce any of the heathen philosophers, much less any whole nations, ever arrived at any clear and explicit knowledge of such a short and plain system of natural religion as I have proposed; yet it does not follow that human reason is not sufficient to lead them into it. A man who is asleep is a reasonable creature still, and the reason that is in him is sufficient to enable him to discourse and act like a man; but he must be first awakened by some happy accident, and his reason set a working in a proper track. A man that is intoxicated with liquor, and thereby led astray into a thousand fooleries, and is preparing mischief and misery for himself, yet has the principle of reason in him still, and if he does not go on to drink, he may recover the

exercise of his rational powers, and thereby find out a way to extricate himself from the dangers which surround him. Now I look upon the bulk of the heathen world in such kind of circumstances as these. Reason, so far as it relates to God, and religion, and eternal happiness, seems to be asleep in them; some happy hints may possibly awaken it, and set it a moving in a right channel, though without revelation it will be ever ready to wander and go astray. Reason, in far the greatest part of them, seems to be intoxicated and drawn away into endless fooleries, instead of religion, led astray by wild appetite and passion, perverted by a thousand prejudices, and by the universal customs of the country, and seduced far from all the paths of truth and duty. Now if any occurrence arise which may bring them to a stand, free them from the intoxicating influences of prejudice, custom, passion, &c. it is possible, in the nature of things, that the powers of reason may then trace out such a religion, which, if sincerely practised, may lead them to final happiness.

VII. But since we find by wretched and deplorable experience, that there have been very few among the best of the heathen nations, whose reason being left to itself, without any traditions of divine revelation, have worked well this way, and traced out all the most important and necessary principles of religion; and since also we have seen what shameful ignorance, even of the chief of these principles, is found universally reigning among the ruder and more unpolished nations, so that scarce a man of them knows *the true God*, or believes or practises the necessary duties towards God, and but very imperfectly toward his neighbour or himself; we may plainly infer this sufficiency of human reason to guide all men in matters of religion, is but little more than a speculative and abstract idea of sufficiency; it is a sufficiency at best, that has very little or no influence: It is such a natural capacity, or remote power, or sufficiency, as is scarce likely to become effectual in practice, in one soul among ten thousand of these rude and brutal creatures which we have been speaking of. And whatsoever speculative, natural, or remote sufficiency in matters of religion and happiness, may be ascribed to human reason among the rude and barbarous nations of the earth; yet it can hardly be called a proximate and practical sufficiency for this purpose: So that there seems to be a plain necessity of some higher means and advantages than they are possessed of, in order to introduce any thing of real religion actually amongst them. This appears evident to me, since I have scarce grounds enough to suppose there is one single person in several of these savage nations, that has arrived at so much religion and holiness, as to be fit, according to the representations of scripture, to enter into the presence of God and heavenly blessedness, under all the guidance and conduct of their own reason; so ineffectual is it to combat with their natural stupidity, their innumerable prejudices, the incessant influence of their brutal education and customs, and their strong propensities to vice.

Logisto. Permit me, gentlemen, after the moderator has spoken, to put in one word, which perhaps has been too much neglected in our present debate, though it has been at first agreed to belong to the question; and that is this: If all mankind used and exercised their reason well, and as they ought to do, I query whether it would not only have a remote, but also a proximate and practical sufficiency, to find out the articles of natural religion so far as is necessary for future happiness: For it is evident enough, that neither the savage nor the polite nations which we have had occasion to speak of, have used their reason as they might and ought to have done on religious subjects.

Sophronius. What you propose, sir, I think may be safely granted by *Pithander*.

even if he admit my distinction of this remote and proximate sufficiency. But the surrounding darkness and ignorance in which most of these heathens were born, the prejudices and customs of their nations, which they imbibe almost from their birth, their perpetual avocations by present sensible objects, the everlasting urgency of their appetites and passions, their native propensities to vice, and the constant temptations that attend them, are such a powerful hinderance to this right and due exercise of their reason on things moral, divine, and spiritual, and on things future and eternal, that though there be a natural sufficiency in human reason to find out such a religion as might save them, yet it is ten thousand to one if ever they duly and rightly exercise it. It is highly improbable, that ever their thoughts should be directed into such a track, and guarded and led onward in it so far, till they have found out such articles of faith and practice in religion as you yourself have granted to be necessary.

And it is upon this account, *Logisto*, I say, that reason which is *remotely sufficient* in the nature of things, may be called *practically insufficient* for the purposes of religion and happiness; since so very few, or none, will actually exercise their reason well; this is the chief thing which I mean by the practical insufficiency of it, that not one in a thousand, or perhaps in many thousands, will so employ their reason as to guide them to religion and happiness under the present circumstances of the heathen world, and especially in the brutal and savage nations.

Pithander. Methinks, *Sophronius*, I feel myself inclined to accept of your distinction, and to agree to your reasoning on this subject.

Logisto. For my part, I thank you heartily *Sophronius*, for your good company, and for your concluding discourse. I must confess, I cannot see how to get over the difficulties which *Pithander* has before proposed, and which you seem to confirm. Nor do I find any just ground to oppose your distinction of this speculative and practical sufficiency of reason in matters of religion, and your present application of it: For according to the light in which *Pithander* and you have set these affairs, I think I must yield that our experience and observation seem to make it evident, that it is but a poor sufficiency that human reason, in these rude nations, has to guide them into the knowledge of acceptable religion. Yet I have still some difficulties upon my mind, for there are several solid arguments drawn from various topics, relating to God and man, to prove that it is necessary God should furnish all mankind with sufficient powers for their own happiness: And these shall be the subject of our discourse to-morrow, when you please to favour me with your company.

Pithander. My sincere thanks are due also to *Sophronius*, for the office he has sustained, and so happily executed in this our conference.

Logisto. Though the moon be risen so high, and the sky so free from clouds, that your walk homewards will be pleasant, yet my servant shall wait on each of you to your dwellings. Here, Davus, attend these gentlemen. Good night, dear sirs, and remember the appointed hour to-morrow.

THE SECOND CONFERENCE.

Sophronius and *Pithander* being met in *Logisto*'s summer-house at the appointed hour, after mutual salutations, the conference began thus:

Logisto. Was it not agreed, gentlemen, that I should now produce my other arguments, drawn from various topics, relating to God and man, to shew that reason is and must be sufficient to guide, conduct, or bring man to happiness in the way of religion?

Sophronius. I think, sir, you have already gone through but one part of your intended enquiry concerning the sufficiency of reason, and that is, "Whether the light of reason be a sufficient guide to teach all men the necessary doctrines and duties of religion." Then it remains to be disputed, "Whether the powers of reason are able to shew such obligations and motives, and to set them before every person in such a view as shall be sufficient to enforce the practice of the duties required, and thus bring a man to the favour of God and happiness?" If I remember aright, sir, you proposed this method of debate yourself at first, and this is what I suppose you mean to include, when you say, *Reason is sufficient, not only to guide, but to conduct and bring men effectually to happiness in a way of religion.* As for those general arguments which you speak of, which may be drawn from the nature of God and the nature of man, they will better be introduced at last, because they tend to prove both parts of your present question at once, *viz.* that reason is sufficient both in its instructions to teach men religion, and in its motives to bring them to the practice of it; or that it has both light and power enough for this purpose.

Logisto. You are in the right, *Sophronius*, this was my meaning in the expression I used of conducting men to happiness, and this was the method which I myself proposed last night: But I must confess, I am something discouraged to pursue the second query, by the success *Pithander* has had in the former part of our debate. And yet, methinks, human reason should be sufficient to conduct man safe to the happiness that is suited to his intellectual and immortal nature, and to bring motives sufficient to enforce the practice of necessary duties. I will begin my argument therefore on this subject, and try what can be said.

Pithander. I think *Sophronius* has set the matter right, and I entreat *Logisto* to proceed to his proof.

Logisto. Then I begin thus. When two things are set before us, whereof our reason tells us with great assurance, that one is vastly more excellent and desirable than the other, reason does what is sufficient to engage us to choose that which is most excellent. Now to apply this to the business in hand: Reason, working in a heathen, may assure him, that virtue hath much beauty and loveliness in it, because it is acting what is fit and right, and according to the nature of things: But vice is a hateful thing, contrary to what is right and fit: Reason can shew him that the everlasting favour of such an almighty and all-sufficient being as God, and the happiness and joys of a future state, which are the rewards of virtue and religion, are vastly preferable to all the delights of sense, which are but short and vanishing, and to all the forbidden indulgences of appetite and passion, which often leave a sting behind them: I think then that reason does its office, and performs what is sufficient to incline the man to choose virtue, the favour of God, and future happiness above all present and tempting sensualities, and to enforce the practice of religion and goodness. Again; When two things are set before us, whereof our reason assures us, that one will bring a hundred times more pain and sorrow upon us than the other, reason does what is sufficient to engage us most carefully to avoid that which brings the greatest misery, and to endure the less evil for the sake of avoiding the greater; and therefore when reason, working in a heathen, assures him that anguish of

conscience, and the displeasure and wrath of an almighty God, through all our state of immortality, which will be the consequent of a vicious life, will be inexpressibly harder to bear than a little troublesome self-denial, which he finds in the present life, in the restraints of his passions and appetites, and in the practice of virtue, reason then does what is sufficient to incline the man to avoid vice and to practise virtue; because it teaches him that it is far better to venture the lesser pains of self-denial here in this life, in order to avoid the more terrible pains and sorrows which the displeasure of God may bring both upon his body here, and his immortal soul hereafter. How can any thing be sufficient, *Pithander*, to bring men to religion and heaven, if such motives as these are not sufficient? And these are the motives that reason finds out and produces.

Pithander. Though your argument seems to run on, sir, in so smooth a current, and to carry such perspicuity and force with it, yet it is not very difficult to give several solid answers, which will shew its weakness. First then, sir, you will please to observe, that your argument supposes these distinct characters of virtue and vice, of lovely and hateful, to be set before heathens even of the savage kind, in their proper colours, and the immortal rewards and punishments that attend them, to be found out and ascertained by their reasoning powers. But I entreat the favour of you, sir, to bethink yourself, how very short you came yesterday of your intended proof, that all heathens can find out those truths or duties which belong to religion, or can set forth the distinct characters of virtue and vice, in their lovely or unlovely appearances. Think again, sir, how much you have failed of any plain proof of the doctrine of a future and eternal state knowable by these heathens, how unable the stupid Americans are to find out, that God will certainly receive penitent sinners to his favour, at least into such a degree of favour as to free them from all punishment, and to make them happy for ever in another world; nor have you proved that their reason will shew them, that God will make the men of vice for ever miserable. Now if these things are not effectually proved, nor so much as the probability of them made evident and easy to the stupid Africans, where are your strong motives to virtue? What is become of your sufficient obligations to practise religion? They vanish and disappear at once: And therefore in the ruder nations of the earth, these motives can have no power to enforce religion or virtue, for they have no existence there in the minds of men, nor are likely to have any existence by the mere workings of their rude reason. Forgive me, good *Logisto*, if I take the freedom here to suppose that this argument of yours, for the power of reason to enforce the practice of virtue and religion, was framed in your thoughts, and glowed there with superior fervour and force, while you imagined these distinct characters of moral good and evil, these lovely features and excellencies of virtue, these hateful ideas of vice, and the motives of everlasting rewards and punishments, to be all easily found by the light of reason, in every heathen: But since you are disappointed in the proof of their reason as a sufficient guide or light to teach them their duty, you must accept the disappointment too of your expectations of the sufficient force or power of reason to influence the practice of it.

Logisto. I must confess, *Pithander*, I came to this conference yesterday big with expectation of proving reason in all men, even in the rudest heathens, to be a very sufficient guide; and though I do not yet yield up all that point entirely, yet I am constrained to acknowledge your replies have greatly weakened my arguments in that first part of our debate, and thence follows a degree of debility of my arguments in the second. You saw, in the beginning of the present discourse, I was something conscious of it.

Pithander. I acknowledge, sir, your sincerity and goodness; but please to permit me to proceed in the next place, and shew, that wheresoever unassisted reason has pretended to find out the future and immortal recompences of virtue and vice, it is with so much doubt and uncertainty as renders the force of the motive very feeble. Reason, in its best exercises, even in the most polite nations, can hardly arise higher than to give them a *grand probability*, that there is an immortal or everlasting state of happiness in the other world, provided for the rewards of the brightest virtue on earth. *Sophronius* has carefully avoided the making the certain knowledge of it a fundamental article: For since all mankind are sinners, and *there is none* perfectly righteous, *no not one*, how can reason assure them, that such imperfect virtue shall have an immortal reward? Much less could their reason ensure such happiness to those who have been great and long sinners, even though they should repent: For can mere reason ever assure the heathens that they shall exist for ever? Why may not God annihilate such imperfect and sinful creatures as they are, and do it even as a favour granted to the penitent, since for their sins they have deserved to have been made miserable in their natural state of immortality, that is, to have been for ever miserable? And he might still reserve the more profligate and impenitent criminals to some future punishment, to shew the distinction his justice makes between the good and the bad, or rather between criminals of less and greater guilt: And yet even this punishment, perhaps, so far as reason could certainly teach us, need not be immortal or everlasting. Such mere doubtful hopes and fears, therefore, as can be raised by such feeble, probable, and uncertain proofs of everlasting pain or pleasure, are but weak things, *Logisto*, to oppose the strength and violence of vicious appetite and unruly passion in mankind. Things present and sensible, whether they be pleasing or painful, they are still certain, and therefore they will generally have much more powerful influence than these distant and invisible futurities which are set before men in a doubtful and uncertain light. It is the light of revelation only that ascertains these important points of religion, and discovers an everlasting heaven and a hell, with full evidence and assurance, and this adds a far superior strength to the motives and obligations of religion. And, in the second place, with your permission, *Logisto*, I would proceed farther, and shew, that human reason is very insufficient for these purposes, in comparison of the blessed gospel of Christ, for many new and different motives and obligations to virtue and piety are presented in the religion of Christ and the gospel, far beyond what the reason of man, untaught and unassisted by revelation, could ever furnish us with.

It is the holy scripture, it is Moses and the prophets, it is Christ and his apostles, who set before us the dreadful evil of sin, both in its nature, as it is contrary to the eternal rectitude and the will of God, and in its demerit and consequences, as it deserves the indignation of God, and is threatened with death and everlasting punishments in another world. It is the scripture that represents to us the excellency and the necessity of religion and moral goodness in a much brighter and more easy light than ever all the reasonings of the philosophers have done, and makes the ploughboy and the shepherd to understand and receive more truth and duty in a few lines, and in half an hour, than the philosopher, with all his boasted reason, had been labouring and digging for half his life, and at last had brought it forth into light, mingled with darkness and much uncertainty.

It is the scripture that makes the duties of religion practicable, by bringing into a near view all those admirable and lovely examples of virtue and piety practised among men,

in the glorious characters of Moses, Joshua, Abraham, and David, Samuel, Job, Daniel, &c. and above all, by Jesus, the author of our religion? What strong assurances of the love, compassion, and tenderness of God toward good men in this world, are given us in scripture, as well as the bright discoveries of the glorious world to come: It is the gospel reveals to men the astonishing love of God, in sending his own Son down to earth to become *a sacrifice, and to make atonement for the sins of* rebellious creatures, and the amazing condescension and compassion of Christ to undergo such sufferings for our sake. These are illustrious incentives to virtue and goodness, which reason knows nothing of: *And time would fail me* to talk over half the glorious and divine encouragements that we find in the book of scripture, to make us active and constant in the practice of religion, and to incline us to disdain and surmount all the difficulties, and hardships, and terrors which lie in our way to heaven. And what can the poor native untaught reason of an Indian furnish him with, to combat all his vicious inclinations, the sinful customs of his country, and the profligate and savage course of life in which he is educated and engaged, that can appear comparable to the divine weapons and armour with which the gospel has furnished us for this sacred warfare? And yet we see all these glorious motives and obligations of christianity do not prove effectual to restrain multitudes of the christian world from vice and irreligion, nor incline them to virtue and holiness, in opposition to the temptations *of the flesh and the world:* How weak and insufficient then must reason be, poor African or American reason, to attain such divine effects?

Logisto. Then surely, *Pithander*, you will not say any more that reason does not offer sufficient obligations to virtue, because the bulk of a nation are not reclaimed by it from their vices; for, by the same rule, *out of your own mouth*, I might *condemn* the gospel of insufficiency too. I might argue concerning the scripture and the religion of Christ, that it does not provide sufficient motives to virtue and goodness, because the bulk and multitude, even in christian nations, are not influenced by it, either to learn or to practise their duty, but are carried away perpetually into vicious courses by appetite and passion, by sinful custom and evil companions, and utter forgetfulness of God, and all that is good.

Pithander. But you must still allow, sir, that the christian revelation has a vast preference above the mere principle of human reason, in that its motives are more numerous and more powerful beyond all comparison. And if the motives to religion, which our reasoning powers can propose, may be called sufficient to equal, or rather to exceed, all temptations to vice and impiety, because in the balance of reason they appear more weighty, then the principles and motives of christianity must be more abundantly sufficient, because, with an infinite superabundance, they outweigh all the temptations of flesh and sin, when put into the same balance of reason. And, on the other hand, if the motives of the gospel, numerous and powerful as they are, prove ineffectual to many thousands that hear them, surely the motives of mere reason, which are much fewer and feebler, are very insufficient, in comparison with those of revelation. In the third place, let it be observed, that there are large and considerable numbers of mankind, in all ages, who have been effectually influenced by the gospel to renounce every vice, and to practise piety toward God, and virtue toward men, and especially where the christian religion has appeared in its full liberty and lustre. But any numbers of truly pious and religious men are not to be heard of among the most polite nations of heathenism. How shamefully vicious in practice were many of the philosophers of greatest fame, if the report of

Diogenes Laertius and others may be credited? How very few of them lived according to the light of nature, and the eternal rules of piety and virtue? But what if here and there a good man or two has been found in heathen countries, where knowledge flourished, such as Italy or Greece, or the lesser Asia, in ancient times? Perhaps in our age, in Great-Britain, there are fifty to one, and it may be more than a hundred; and if we should compare the numbers of religious persons in the British isles, with those of Africa or North-America, I have some reason to think the proportion would exceed several thousands to one.

Logisto. Then, my friend, according to your own argument, if the motives and obligations of christianity are proved to be sufficient to enforce the practice of religion, and to conduct a man to heaven, because they have been found effectual and successful in the hearts of some hundreds or thousands, I think I may make this inference, and you must grant it, that the motives of reason are not utterly insufficient for this purpose, if they have been effectual to bring but here and there one to practise religion, and thereby lead them to the divine favour. And if it be sufficient for a few, why not for all who have the same natural faculties?

Pithander. Will you please, sir, to resume your own inference, and apply it thus? Reason has been sufficient in a Euclid to trace out a noble scheme of geometrical theorems; in a Locke to write an excellent Essay on Human Understanding; and in a Virgil to compose an admirable Heroic Poem; will you infer therefore that reason in all men is sufficient to frame geometrical schemes, write fine essays and heroic poems? Will this conclusion hold, sir? Can all mankind become Lockes, and Euclids, and Virgils? Remember, good sir, we are debating about such a sufficiency as may render all mankind holy and happy. Not that I suppose it is as hard to trace out religion, as it is to be a Locke or a Euclid; but this application of your argument shews how weak the inference is; and though here and there one may happen to do it, it will not follow that all mankind can do the same. Besides, sir, this small number, this here and there one, that you speak of, who had been led by reason to religion, are found only perhaps in European nations, or in western Asia, where they have had correspondence with Jews or christians, or have received some traditional notices, or hints of divine revelation, without which I much question whether there would have been, in fact, one truly religious man in the world: So that it is to the notices and fragments of revelation, conveyed to men from Noah, or Job, or Abraham, or the Jews, or from some other inspired person, that I ascribe the real godliness of any person among the gentile nations, rather than to the mere force of human reason in its present degenerate state: For I much question whether you can inform me of one person, one single person, of true piety and virtue in the wilds of Africa or America, in all their nations, and in many past ages, unless they have had some assistances from persons of other nations who had acquaintance with revelation.

Logisto. What! will not you allow one good man to have been found for several ages among all these heathen nations without revelation? That is hard indeed: Doth not such a degree of uncharitableness border upon cruelty? Can you think the God of mercy so cruel as your present sentiments represent him?

Pithander. Sir, if it were a proper place here, I could shew you, that this representation of things is very agreeable to the language of God in his sacred writings, and yet he is a God of mercy still. But we shall have occasion to enter into this argument,

when you come to talk upon the equity and goodness of God. At present I content myself to say, that since very few in any heathen countries, after the division of the world into Jews and gentiles, in the days of Moses, have been truly religious persons, in comparison with the multitudes under the light of divine revelation, it is evident, that reason has not this sufficiency to enforce the practice of religion, in any tolerable proportion to what revelation or scripture has; and therefore, in a comparative sense, it may well be called insufficient, while revelation is justly called sufficient in this sense.

Logisto. Well then, sir, you seem to acknowledge a degree of insufficiency in revelation itself, since it is but comparatively sufficient.

Pithander. I am not in pain to grant this, sir, that scripture itself, or the gospel of Christ, considered merely as a written book, or as a mere system of doctrines, rules, and motives, doth not pretend to such a complete and powerful sufficiency of itself; that is, though in itself it has a vast superiority to all other rules and motives, yet it pretends not to such an effectual influence over the hearts of men, in opposition to all present temptations, and the powers of flesh and sense, by the mere outward proposal of its motives, without the promised aids of the Holy Spirit. It is this heavenly influence that renders even the gospel motives so efficacious. It is to the aids of this superior grace of God, concurring with the revelation of the gospel, that the primitive preachers and defenders of christianity direct their disciples, in order to obtain victory over their sensual and vicious inclinations, Rom. viii. 13. *If by the Spirit ye mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.* It is to the operations of the Holy Spirit of God, or the agency of God by his Spirit, that they ascribe the mighty change of their natures from vice to virtue, from sin to holiness and purity of heart and life, which is called *regeneration*, or *being born of God.* 1 Pet. i. 22. *Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth by the Spirit.* 1 John ii. 29. *Every one that doth righteousness is born of God.* And iii. 9. *Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin;* that is, freely, and readily, and frequently as before. It *is he that is born of God that overcometh the world* in all the allurements of flesh and sense; 1 *John* v. 4. And this, in the language of our Saviour, *is being born of the Spirit;* John iii. 5, 6. If the Corinthians were sanctified from their vices of heart and life, it is *by the Spirit of our God;* 1 Cor. vi. 11. If the Thessalonians are brought to salvation, it is *through sanctification of the Spirit*, as well as *belief of the truth;* 2 Thess. ii. 13. Even all the important discoveries of divine motives contained in the gospel, which St. Paul calls *the weapons of his warfare;* 2 Cor. x. 4. and *which are mighty to the pulling down of strong holds* of sin in the heart, it is only through God; that is, through the present power of God. And St. Paul tells us, in Rom. viii. 26. *it is the Spirit of God that helpeth our infirmities, and teaches us to pray;* and the aids of this Spirit are promised to them who seek it. Luke xi. 13. *Your heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.*

Logisto. But why this long bead-roll of your scriptures cited to me, who doubt the truth of them, and cannot yet believe any thing so sacred and divine in them as you imagine?

Pithander. I hope, sir, you will permit the first preachers and teachers of our religion to know what their own doctrine is, without determining whether it be divine or not; and I cite them for no other purpose but to shew you, that they themselves acknowledge, that the glorious sufficiency, which even the blessed gospel of Christ has to conduct and bring souls to heaven in a way of religion, does not arise only from the

strength that its motives have, as powerful as they are, to persuade the heart of man to practise true religion, in opposition to all manner of temptations; but it arises also from the promised aids of grace, or supernatural influences of the blessed Spirit, concurring with the moral influence of these motives.

Logisto. I see we are now running into enthusiasm apace. I hoped we should have none of this kind of discourse here. Pray tell us, *Pithander*, what does this divine Spirit do to make men religious, more than give them this gospel, or confirm the truth of it, as you suppose, by gifts and wonders?

Pithander. If it would not lead us too far from our present subject, perhaps I could set this matter in a very rational light. At present I shall only say, that in some unknown way and manner, it may either give further light to the understanding, or a secret bias and propensity to the will, or, at least, it may set these motives, both of reason and revelation, before the soul in a stronger and more persuasive view, and by this means effectually prevail with the man to become thoroughly religious.

Logisto. But may not the poor heathens in the dark regions of the earth, who are left to the mere instructions of nature and reason, and have fewer advantages than the christians pretend to; I say, may not these poor wretches be favoured by a merciful God with some such assistances from heaven, to help them in their inquiries after religion and happiness, and to assist them in their endeavours to practise the one, and obtain the other? Will a merciful God bestow such inward assistances on those who have so much outward light, and yet give none at all of it to those who sit in darkness?

Pithander. I thank you, *Logisto*, that you feel yourself reduced so far as to make this enquiry; to which I shall offer these two plain replies. First, I will by no means deny, that ever God favours the heathens with this blessing. And, doubtless, such is the beneficent and compassionate nature of the blessed God, that if he sees the heart of any poor savage breathing toward heaven, and exerting any feeble efforts towards virtue and religion, he is not wanting to encourage it with all proper assistances of light and strength, till the creature refuses to proceed, and turns itself aside from God and his grace. But whatever a merciful God may do out of his abundant compassion, to enlighten and assist such poor perishing creatures, yet these savage nations of whom we have been chiefly speaking, and indeed the greatest part of the heathen world, appear to have had very little of this help, and they have no reason to expect it, or hope for it, since they do not make religion and virtue the matter of their serious enquiry; they have no solicitude about *the true God*, or his service, or his favour, nor do they address themselves to God, in order to attain his aid. The Grecian philosophers boldly despised it, declaring, that "they need not ask the gods for virtue, for this was within their own power, and they could acquire it of themselves." The impious expressions of the stoics on this subject are well known to the learned, that *their wise man was superior to the gods in this, that their gods were wise or good by nature, but man by his own choice.*

Besides, those individual persons among the heathens who seek not these aids from heaven, have no promise of encouragement that they shall have these divine favours bestowed upon them,* and they live indeed like persons abandoned to their own vices;

* There are general promises, indeed, in the Old Testament, that the gospel shall be given to some heathen nations; but there is no particular person, or age, or single family of heathens, which can claim these aids of the Holy Spirit, while they do not pray for them, nor use the natural advantages and powers which they have already in the sincere pursuit of religion.

so that one may venture to pronounce partly in the language of scripture, concerning these nations in general, while they are without divine revelation, they are *without God*, without Christ, and without the Spirit too, *and without hope in the world.*

My second reply is this, that if you allow, *Logisto*, such influences or assistances from heaven to be necessary, or almost necessary, in the present corrupt and wretched state of the heathen world, to guide and conduct them to happiness in a way of religion, why may not you be easily led to believe that God has actually given some divine influences, some special revelations and instructions to some of the ancient inhabitants of this miserable world, to the patriarchs, to the jewish prophets, to Christ, and his apostles, which have been committed to writing for the instruction of the world, on purpose to make the way to heaven more evident and easy to wretched mankind, labouring under such thick darkness, such huge prejudices, and such innumerable temptations?

Logisto. Why truly, I think I may allow of some divine influences of light from the merciful God, to lead his unhappy and bewildered creatures into the way of religion and happiness, by a discovery of the important truths and duties of religion to them, with as much or more reason than I can allow of divine influences of power upon the hearts of men, to enable them to practise these duties: And, surely, if the influences of power seem in any case necessary, the influences of light or knowledge are much more so: This was a happy thought of yours, *Pithander*, and I give you my thanks for it.

Sophronius. I think, gentlemen, you yourselves plainly perceive, that this debate between you is brought nearly to an issue. There is no need of my resuming the case, or speaking any thing upon the subject.

Logisto. Yes, pray, *Sophronius*, let us have your thoughts upon it, and perhaps they may introduce some further conversation, to elucidate this argument yet more perfectly.

Sophronius. If I must give my sentiment in this matter, about the sufficiency of reason to persuade men to religion, and enforce upon them the practice of virtue, I must determine the point much after the same manner as I concluded the debate of yesterday, about the sufficiency of reason to guide us into the articles of religion; and that shall be done in these few propositions:

I. In natural, corporeal, and necessary agents, that cause or principle can only be properly called sufficient to produce the effect, which doth and will actually and certainly produce it, where all other external things are found which are naturally necessary to this particular effect. So an acorn is said to be sufficient to produce an oak, when it is planted in a proper soil, and has the necessary outward advantages of rain and sun, &c. So a clock is sufficient to shew the hours of the day, when all the weights, and wheels, and springs of movement, and mechanical parts of that engine, are rightly formed and situated, adjusted and put in motion. But in spiritual, and voluntary, and moral agents, a cause or principle may be pronounced sufficient, in the nature of things, to produce the effect, where the effect is not actually produced, supposing that the motives are such as may and ought to influence the will to produce the effect. Wheresoever the obligations to duty are just and strong, and appear so to the attentive mind, and, according to the rules of reason, ought to persuade the will *to choose the good, and refuse the evil*, there these obligations may be called sufficient naturally to reform the man, though the will may be led astray by a thousand other influences, and may not once in ten thousand times be effectually persuaded *to refuse the evil, and to choose the good.*

II. Wheresoever the motives and obligations to religion, which arise not only from the fitness of things, but also from the favour or displeasure of God, and from everlasting happiness and misery in a future state, are traced out by reason in the heathen world, though they are not all set in their full light and strength, but arise only to a degree of doubtful probability, yet they may be called, in some sense, naturally sufficient to enforce the practice of religion; and the reason is plain, because even the *mere probability* of the love or anger of an almighty Being, and of an eternal state of misery or happiness, ought to overbalance all our present views of certain pleasure or certain uneasiness, which belong to this short and perishing life; and so they ought to incline a reasonable man to choose the hardships of virtue, with the love of God, and the probable or doubtful hopes of eternal peace, and to refuse the pleasures of vice, with the anger of God, and the probable danger or fear of eternal pain.

III. Though I allow the sufficiency of reason to enforce the practice of virtue and piety in this sense, yet when we consider how very little influence it has ever had, even in polite nations, to reform the world, or to render men truly religious, and no influence at all, so far as we can find, in the darker corners of the earth, those habitations of atheism, idolatry, and cruelty, I think, we can account it little more than a mere speculative and notional sufficiency, arising from the nature of things; but since it is confirmed by experience of success in so very few, if any, evident instances, it can scarce be called a practical sufficiency to bring men to heaven in a way of religion, where it acts, or rather sleeps, in such a manner as to let whole nations of miserable mankind run on in the practice of shameful vices, from one generation to another, thoughtless of the true God, virtue, and religion, and careless about his love or his anger in a future state.

Upon the whole, I think we must conclude, that since human reason, in a remote and speculative sense, may be sufficient to guide and conduct all mankind to religion and future happiness, *Logisto* is so far in the right, and may be allowed to say, reason is sufficient. But since, in a practical or experimental sense, we find reason has scarce any, or rather no sufficiency to attain these ends, *Pithander* may continue to maintain his opinion also, that reason is insufficient; yet it ought to be remembered, that it is in this sense only, and with this limitation. Whensoever, therefore, I read any christian writers, who are men of good understanding, and of moderate principles, asserting that human reason, in heathen nations, is not sufficient to guide and conduct men to happiness in a way of religion, I take them to mean such a practical insufficiency as I have distinguished and described here: And in this sense I would understand the Bishop of London in his second Pastoral Letter, when he declares reason to be insufficient, as well as Dr. Clarke in his Discourse of Revealed Religion: And when I hear of other christian authors, or preachers, maintaining the sufficiency of reason for this purpose, I would suppose, they mean no more than such a natural and remote sufficiency, which will scarce ever become really effectual without revelation, and especially in the rude and barbarous nations of the earth.

Though I must confess, it would better guard their expressions, on both sides, from mistake, since the controversy is on foot, if they pleased to use some such distinction or limitation, when they pronounced either upon the strength or weakness of human reason, and neither called it absolutely sufficient nor absolutely insufficient for the purposes of religion and happiness. And I am ready to persuade myself, *Logisto*, by this time, is almost inclined to believe, that natural reason, unassisted in all mankind, is not proxi-

mately and practically sufficient, to make them holy and happy here and hereafter. Thus it happens sometimes, that huge controversies may be allayed and silenced, and contending parties reconciled, by a plain and easy distinction.

> "Hi motus animorum, atque hæc certamina tanta
> Pulveris exigui jactu compressa quiescunt."—Virg.

And if things do really stand in the light in which I have endeavoured to set them, if reason has only such a remote and speculative sufficiency, to guide and conduct sinful mankind to happiness in a way of religion, if there are so very few, if any, who were ever guided and conducted by it alone to happiness, then there is a most evident necessity of brighter light, clearer discoveries of duty, stronger motives and assistances, superior to what reason can furnish us with, to make mankind truly wise and blessed; and this light and these motives and assistances are eminently to be found in the religion of Christ.

Logisto. How much soever I may be inclined to receive your opinion, *Sophronius*, and to abide by your determination in this controversy, yet I cannot think fit to declare myself roundly and positively upon this subject, till I have tried the force of all the arguments which I have in reserve: But perhaps you will think it too much to enter upon any new topics at present.

Sophronius. Well then, gentlemen, I would propose at present to relieve the fatigue of intense thinking, and close debate: And at the same time, in order to confirm what I have offered about the practical insufficiency of reason in matters of religion, permit me to read two short manuscripts, which I brought hither to entertain you this evening, since I found your debate yesterday ran very much upon the sufficiency of reason, even in the most ignorant nations, to lead them to religion and happiness. The manuscripts are nothing but a short abstract of all the sense of religion that I could find in history among the Northern Americans, and the Southern Africans. The first relates to the rude nations of the North America, collected many years ago, for my own use, out of a large volume, written by Father Hennepin, a missionary of Flanders, who travelled over all that country, and made a considerable stay in some parts of it. All the notion of a God or religion which they generally have, is this: They see some bodies produce strange effects which they cannot comprehend, they see some appearances of nature or art which are very unusual, and then they ascribe the causes of these effects or appearances to some being that is above themselves, and call it in their language Otkon, or Manitoo, or Atahouta, which means a sort of spirit, either good or evil. So when they see a gun make a flash and a noise, and immediately either a wild bull, or two or three wild fowl fall down dead, they cry, it is iron with an Otkon in it; for they are not able to comprehend the meaning of it. So when they find a great cascade or waterfall, which seems a little frightful, and dangerous to approach, they say, a spirit dwells there. And for such reasons they call all that dwell beyond the great lake, that is, the ocean, spirits; for the Europeans perform several things which they understand not. When the author was among the Issati, he began to make him a vocabulary in their own language; and when they found he could not understand their words sometimes till he had consulted his vocabulary, they thought his book was a spirit, which told him what they said.

And this seems to be the spring of the notion which they have of their own souls; and according to their own way of reasoning, they think that guns, and bows, and arrows,

and wild bulls, have souls also. When they die, they have a notion of their spirits going into the country of souls, where they fancy that the souls of every animate and inanimate thing on earth are to be found. They bury their bows, arrows, shoes, pipes, earthen pots, rackets, that is, their broad network sandals, made of thongs of leather, &c. that so the souls of their bows and arrows may assist them in hunting the souls of elks and beavers in the country of souls; and that the souls of rackets may be useful to them in travelling over the snow in that country. There are some particular bones of the bulls and beavers which they kill, that are kept choicely by them, and are counted a sort of present mansions for their souls, and they use them well, lest, say they, the soul of the bulls which we have killed, should go and tell the other bulls, that we have cut them to pieces, and eat them; and then they imagine that the rest of the bulls would never come within their reach, or be catched by them, either in this world or the other.

They think that the souls of the Europeans go to a different country from that of the Americans; and some of them are afraid to be baptized, lest we should make them slaves in the country of souls. When one of them asked the author, whether there be good game for hunting in our country of souls, as there is in theirs, he answered, there is no need of it: Immediately they clapped their hands to their mouths, and said, thou art a liar; can any thing live without eating? Scarce any of these savages have any notion of a God; they do not seem to comprehend a plain argument on that subject. The author had much ado to make them understand what he meant, when he would give them the idea of a God; for they have no word for a God in their language, and yet it is very expressive in other things. He called him, therefore, the great Master of life, and the great Captain of heaven and earth; and when he preached a God to them, they enquired, whether he could send them some elks and beavers. It is true, among some of these nations a sudden glimmering of a Deity sometimes comes on their minds. Some think the sun to be such a great superior power, but not without much confusion. Some fancy him a spirit that commands the air. And some of the more southern inhabitants of that country imagine a universal soul belongs to the whole world, just as every particular being has a particular soul.

Father Marquette, who is cited by this author, says, every one of the Illinois has his peculiar god, whom they call Manitoo. It is sometimes a stone, a bird, a serpent, or any thing they dream of; and they think this Manitoo will prosper their hunting, their fishing, their wars: They blow the smoke of their tobacco on their Manitoo, which they count a salutation of their god. For the most part, says our author, those who own a God, have scarce any sense of religion, and but few of them have any outward gestures to convince men of their esteem for a deity; they have no temple, no priests, no sacrifices, nor scarce any forms of worship, unless it be to evil or malicious spirits, from whom they fear they shall receive some hurt: And to these some of them have made some kind of offerings. They throw in tobacco, or beavers' skins, to a cascade or fall of water, which is difficult to pass, and cannot easily be avoided, to engage the deity that presides there in their favour: And if, after the practice of any of their superstitions, they find any degree of success, they are then established in it, though they should mistake ten times for one that hits.

As the generality of these nations have little sense of religion, dreams among them supply all other defects, and serve instead of prophecy, laws, rules of action, and under-

takings in war or hunting. If in their dreams they were persuaded to kill a man, they would hardly fail to do it. Parents' dreams serve for their own and their children's actions, and the dreams of the captain for all the people of the village. Some of them suppose, that Otkon, or Atahouta, made the world, and one Messoo, or Otkon, going a hunting with his dogs, were lost in a great lake, which overflowed the whole earth in a little time; but afterwards, this Otkon gathered a little earth by the help of some animals, and repaired the world. Others say, the woman that made the world came down from heaven, and fluttering in the air awhile, but finding no ground, when the earth was thus overflowed, the tortoise offered her back to her, on which she lighted, and by little and little such a quantity of mud and dirt gathered about the tortoise's back, that it increased so as to make America.

In the Southern parts of this vast Northern country, the people are something more sensible, and are attentive to the things of their religion. But in the North there is scarce any thing to be met with but an inconceivable blindness, blockish insensibility, and prodigious remoteness from their Maker, so that whole ages would scarce be sufficient to reduce them to piety and virtue. These are the sentiments of the traveller. And they have, saith he, such vices amongst them as are directly contrary to the spirit of christianity. Their cruel and barbarous revenges are practices which they cannot part with. They will wait three or four days behind a tree, to kill a man whom they hate. Gluttony and drunkenness in a high degree prevail amongst them, and mere brutish addictedness to eating and drinking; their intemperance of every kind, their inconstancy to the partners of their bed, immoderate letchery, polygamy, changing and forsaking their wives, are great hinderances to their conversion, because christianity forbids them.

They have such a universal indifference to every thing of religion in which they are instructed, that it is very amazing. They would suffer themselves to be baptized six times a day for a glass of aqua vitæ, or a pipe of tobacco. They will sometimes offer infants to the font, but without any motive of religion. They look upon all our mysteries as tales and dreams, as some of them do upon their own accounts of any thing sacred. If you bid them pray, and teach them prayers, they readily comply: Bid them fall on their knees, not smoke, be uncovered, hearken to me, &c. they do all. Say to-morrow is Sunday, or a day of prayer, they say, I am glad of it: Tell them you must make a vow to the Master of life, that you will never be drunk again, they say, I will do it, and are drunk again to-morrow, if they can get brandy. They do every thing with such a careless air, such a negligent thoughtlessness, and universal indifference, that it is to little purpose to have them do any thing. If images or beads are given them, they use them for ornaments. In a word, if they hope to get any favour or present for themselves, or their nation, some of them will do any thing in these respects that you enjoin them. They never contradict any man's speech or opinion, and think it is civility to leave every man to his own sentiment; therefore they will believe, or pretend to believe, all you say. So that a man must not go to America to become a martyr for his faith. They never kill any body for a different opinion: And when they tell you their tales of the woman and the tortoise, they reprove you of incivility, if you contradict them, and say, they believed all you said, and therefore you ought to believe all they say. If any manner of impressions of religion have been made upon themselves or their children, yet when the seasons of hunting come, away they go with their tribe for many months

together, and lose all that they had learned, and make the labours of a missionary endless and vain.

At last this missionary, the author, laments and declares, That this people are still so savage, that in all the many years labours that I spent among the Iroquois, besides my great expedition among several others of the nations, I did very little good besides one or two infants that I baptized. One among the Issati, and for want of accommodation, I did it without any ceremony, taking one christian for the witness of the baptism, only spilling the water on the head of the little savage, saying, Creature of God, *I baptize thee in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost;* then I took half my altar-cloth and spread over the body of the infant: A little after it died; and I was glad, says this poor friar, it pleased God to take this little christian out of the world; for it is to be feared, if it had lived, it would have trod in its father's steps. I have often attributed my preservation, amidst the greatest dangers, to the care I took for its baptism. The greatest things, he says, that missionaries can yet do, is to baptize a few infants, and dying adult persons, who desire it. But after all the cares and entire sacrifice of a missionary's life, it would be a happy recompence if they had the glory to convert one single soul. But they must cry out, it is beyond their force, and only the Spirit of God can do it. Thus far my epitome of the religion of these North Americans.

The other manuscript is an abstract of the religious affairs of the several nations of the Hottentots at the Cape of Good Hope, which I took out of a very entertaining book, written originally in High German by Peter Kolben, translated into English, and published in the year 1731. The author was particularly employed to collect the materials of his history, and had a long residence there, in the Dutch settlement, for that purpose, and often made excursions for full information of all their affairs. The account he gives of their religion is this: They believe a supreme Being, the Creator of heaven and earth, and of every thing in them. They call him *Gounja-Gounja, or the God of gods, and say he is a good man; that he does nobody any hurt, and from whom none need be apprehensive of any; and that he dwells far above the moon.* But it does not appear, that they have any institution of worship directly regarding the supreme God. I never saw, or could hear, that any one of them paid any act of devotion immediately to him. I have talked to them roundly on this head, and endeavoured to make them sensible of the folly and absurdity of neglecting his worship, while they worship what they call gods that are inferior and dependent upon him: But they will rarely reason upon the matter, or attend to any thing that is said upon it. The most sensible of them, when they are in humour to answer on this head, will tell you the following very remarkable matter: *That their first parents so grievously sinned and offended against the supreme God, that he cursed them and all their posterity with hardness of heart; so that they know little of him, and have still less inclination to serve him.* The reader, without doubt, will be astonished to hear such a tradition as this at the Cape of Good Hope, which seems to relate to the curse of Adam, or of Ham: I assure him, the Hottentots have such a tradition.

Forsaking the worship of the true God, though they acknowledge his being, and some of his attributes, the Hottentots adore the moon as an inferior and visible god. They suppose the moon has the disposal of the weather, and invoke her for such weather as they want. They assemble for the celebration of her worship at the full and new moon constantly; no inclemency of the weather prevents them. In shouting, screaming,

singing, jumping, stamping, dancing, prostration on the ground, clapping of hands, and an unintelligible jargon, lie all their formalities of the worship of the moon; and in such expressions as these—I salute you, you are welcome, grant us fodder for our cattle, and milk in abundance. In rounds of these words and actions they continue the whole night, till pretty far of the next day.

The Hottentots likewise adore, as a benign deity, a certain insect peculiar, it is said, to the Hottentot countries. This animal is of the dimensions of a child's little finger; the back green, the belly specked with white and red. It is provided with two wings, and on its head two horns. To this little winged deity, whenever they set sight upon it, they render the highest tokens of veneration. And if it honours, forsooth, a village with a visit, the inhabitants assemble about it in transports of devotion, as if the Lord of the universe was among them. They sing and dance round it troop after troop, while it stays, in the highest ecstasy; throwing to it the powder of an herb they call Buchu, our botanists call it Spiræa. They cover, at the same time, the whole area of the village, the tops of the cots, and every thing without doors, with the same powder. They likewise kill two fat sheep as a thank-offering for this high honour. And it is impossible to drive out of a Hottentot's head, but that *the arrival of this insect in a village brings happiness and prosperity to all the inhabitants.* They believe that *all their offences, to that moment, are buried in oblivion, and all their iniquities done away.* If this insect happens to light upon a Hottentot, he is looked upon as a man *without guilt*, and distinguished and reverenced *as a saint*, and the *delight of the deity ever after.* His neighbours glory that they have *so holy a man* amongst them, and publish the matter far and near. The fattest ox belonging to the village is immediately killed for a thank-offering, and the time is turned into a festivity in honour of the deity and the saint. This insect I have often seen, and beheld the Hottentots more than once at these solemnities.

The Hottentots likewise pay a religious veneration to their saints and men of renown departed: They honour them not with tombs, statues, or inscriptions, but consecrate woods, mountains, fields, and rivers to their memory. When they pass by these places, *they implore the protection of the dead, for them and their cattle,* they muffle their heads in their mantles, and sometimes they dance round those places, singing and clapping their hands. They worship also an evil deity, whom they look upon as *the father of mischief, and the source of all their plagues.* They call him Touquoa, and say, *he is a little crabbed inferior captain, whose malice against the Hottentots will seldom let him rest, and who never did, nor had it in his nature to do any good to any body.* They worship him, therefore, say they, in order to sweeten him and avert his malice. It is this Touquoa, say they, who stirs up enemies against them. It is he who frustrates all their good designs: It is he who sends all pain and vexation: It is he who afflicts them and their cattle with diseases, and sets on the wild beasts to devour them: It is he who is the author of all ill luck: And it is he, say they, who teaches the wicked Hottentots the cursed art of witchcraft; by which, they believe, innumerable mischiefs are done to the persons and cattle of the good. They therefore coax him, upon any apprehension of danger or misfortune, with the offering of an ox or a sheep; and at other times perform divers ceremonies of worship, to wheedle and keep him quiet.

Father Tachart hath delivered their worship of this evil deity very well in the following words: *We honour Touquoa at times, say the Hottentots, by killing a fat ox or a sheep, according to our apprehensions of his designs to plague us. With the fat we anoint our*

bodies, and with the flesh we regale one another; this being the way to please or reconcile him to us, if we have offended, though we know not how we have offended. He reckons what he pleases an offence, and plagues us when he pleases, and it has been always a custom amongst us thus to appease him. I have now given, saith my author, the whole system of the Hottentot religion, every tenet of which, though labouring with the wildest absurdities, they embrace so heartily, and hold so dear, that I look upon it, as a great many others have done, an impossibility to ravish one of them out of a Hottentot's bosom. Reason against them, and they wrap themselves up in a sullen silence, or run away; and it is very rare that you can get them to hear you upon any religious topic. Never certainly were there, in matters of religion, so obstinate and so infatuated a people. Some Hottentots, in the hands of Europeans, have dissembled a profession of christianity for a while, but have ever renounced it for their native idolatries, as soon as they could get out of their hands. I never heard of a Hottentot that died a christian. They seem born with a mortal antipathy to every religion but their own.

Many a time have I allured them in small companies, with tobacco, wine, brandy, and other things, to places of retirement, in order to eradicate their nonsensical idolatrous whimsies, and instruct them in the pure worship of God. As long as my store lasted, I had their company, who seemed to attend with a design to learn; but they only listened as spungers, in order to be treated with the other bottle, and laugh at me when I was gone. At this bite they are as arch as other people. When my store was spent, they immediately called out for more hire, and without it would not stay to hear a word more of religion. How have I laboured to bring them to a sense of their duty to Almighty God! How have I plied them upon the absurdity of acknowledging his superiority to all other gods, and yet refusing him any act of worship! And how disappointed were all my endeavours! I was still answered, when I could get an answer, with the tradition of the offence of their first parents, and the blindness and hardness of heart with which they were all cursed for it. From which, when I had taken all the advantage I could to inform and awaken them, and pressed them hard upon the matter, their refuge was in this contradiction, that Gounja-Gounja, or the God of gods, was a good man, who neither did, nor had it in his power to do any one any hurt, though they had told me before how he had cursed their ancestors. When we had got so far, and I had followed my blow upon their absurdities and contradictions, they would often in a rage deny all they had owned, and flying from me say, *they neither believed in God, nor would hear a word about him.*

Thus much for their religion towards God: And though they are so incorrigibly stupid in this respect, yet partly their native temper, and partly their common safety and peace, oblige them to be more careful in their conduct toward their neighbours; and it must be acknowledged, in the main, they are affectionate and hospitable. The generality of them are a loving honest people, meaning no harm usually to those who do not injure them, unless a stranger be alone amongst them in some part very distant from the European settlements, though it is very seldom they are known to do mischief, except the bands of robbers who are among them, and who live by plunder. Indeed they make no scruple of lying, and impose upon any of the Europeans with what falsehoods they please, but it is chiefly where property is not concerned: And though they do not usually practise or encourage thieving, cheating, or plunder, yet there are three impious and cruel customs among them, which contradict the light of nature in a gross manner, and yet they practise them with all freedom.

One is, *their abusive and abominable insolence towards their own mothers;* for when a young fellow is admitted into the society of men, which is done with great solemnity, about eighteen years old, he is discharged from the tuition of his mother, and may insult her when he will with impunity. He may cudgel her if he pleases only for his humour, without any danger of being called to an account for it. And these things I have often known done. Nor are these unnatural extravagances attended with the least scandal. On the contrary, they are esteemed as tokens of a manly temper and bravery; and the authors of them now and then obtain applause. Immediately after the induction of a young fellow into the society of men, it is an ordinary thing for him to go and abuse his mother, and make a reproachful triumph upon his being discharged from her tuition, in testimony of the sincerity of his intentions to follow the admonitions of the declaimer, at his induction into the society of men. When the old fellows are admonished, and very often have I admonished them, against this horrid, unnatural practice of leading their sons into cruelty and neglect for their mothers, not a word will they hear with patience; nor can any answer be obtained from them besides the darling one of the Hottentots, whenever they are heated and confused by any enquiry into their own matters; it is Hottentot custom, and ever was so: And with this they think you ought to be satisfied.

Another wicked and unnatural practice is, *the starving of their parents when they are able no longer to crawl out of their hut, nor do any manner of service in it.* Then the old man is obliged to make over all that he has to his eldest son, or his nearest male relation; and the heir erects a hut in some solitary place, at a good distance from their village, and asking consent of the village, which they never refuse, the old man is conveyed to this hut, and being laid in the middle of it, with a small stock of provision placed within his reach, the company take their leave of the old wretch, and abandon him for ever; and there he is left from that hour, without any one to comfort or assist him, or so much as to look in upon him; but he is exposed to die there, either of age or hunger, or to be devoured by some wild beast. When the women are superannuated, they practise the same in every respect, and leave them to perish.

The third inhuman and national iniquity is, their *exposing children, especially girls, or burying them alive,* if the parents think they are not able to maintain them; and especially if there happen to be twins, and one of them be a girl, she is certainly condemned, if either the scarcity of the mother's milk, or the poverty of the parents, be alleged against breeding of them both. When they resolve to rid themselves of one, they carry the babe to a considerable distance from the village, and look for a hole in the earth made by a hedge-wolf, tyger, or other wild creature: In such a hole, if they find one, they lay the babe alive; then stopping up the mouth of the hole with earth and stones, forsake it for ever. If they find not such a sepulchre presently, they tie the babe, stretched on its back, to some lower bough of the next tree, and leave it to starve, or be devoured by birds or beasts of prey. Sometimes they leave the poor cast-away among bushes.

Though the immortality of their own souls is an article that enters not into the religion of the Hottentots, and which, for that reason, I mentioned not in my account of their religion, and though they say nothing at any time concerning it in a religious way, and perhaps never think of it with regard to their own souls, yet does it appear very plainly, that they believe the soul outlives the body, and that from the following particulars:—1. They offer prayers and praises to the good Hottentots departed, and attribute or dedicate to them some hills, or woods, or rivers:—2. They are apprehensive lest the dead

should return and molest them. They therefore, upon the death of any man, woman, or child of them, remove with their bag and baggage to a new settlement, believing that the dead never haunt any places but those they died in, whether they be good or bad. But to what end they conceive souls to exist out of the body, or whether they trouble their heads about it, I know not. They suppose, according to all the intelligence I got upon the matter, that the malice of Touquoa is confined to this world, and cannot act beyond it. Nor could I ever catch the least hint among them to think, that any of them believe that either the good at death go to any certain place of bliss, or the bad to any place of torment. Thus far the author of this narrative.

And thus, gentlemen, I have given you, in short, all the account that I could find of any sense of religion, either in the Hottentot nations, who possess a large track of land on the east, south, and west of the Cape of Good Hope, and in the several nations of various names, who inhabit a great part of the inland country of North America. The only remark I make here shall be this, *viz.* that though both these travellers spent much time in these countries, and took a great deal of pains with the natives to instruct them in religion, and the knowledge and worship of the true God, yet they could never find one soul among them all that learned to know and worship *the one true God*, and to practise sincere and serious religion: So far were their own reasoning powers from a practical sufficiency to guide and conduct them in religious affairs, that their reason would not hearken to instruction, it would neither teach them, nor let them learn the way to heaven.

Pithander. You stand entitled, *Sophronius*, to our best acknowledgments, for the pains you have taken in entertaining us with these two accounts of African and American religion. And can you now, dear *Logisto*, deny the justice of the remark that *Sophronius* has made? Can you ever suppose, sir, that such sort of people as these have any reasoning powers in them sufficient to frame and furnish out a religion for themselves, such as is suited to the majesty of God, and to the dignity of human nature, such as can restore sinful mankind to a temper fit for the blessedness of heaven, or such as can recommend guilty and sinful creatures to the favour of a wise, a holy, and a righteous God? I mean, is the reason that is in them sufficient to do it in a practical and experimental sense, according to the distinction with which *Sophronius* has endeavoured to reconcile our present controversy?

Logisto. I acknowledge we are greatly obliged to *Sophronius* for the abstracts he hath given us of the religion of these nations: And it must be granted, that these narratives are more worthy of credit, since the authors from whom he borrowed them were not mere sailors, who touched upon the coast, and left it again in a few days, but resided there a considerable time, and spent some years in the countries, as well as conversed with great numbers of the inhabitants. I know not what to answer, *Pithander*, with regard to these particular nations; but surely our learned friend has chosen the most stupid, the most ignorant, the most brutal and obstinate tribes of mankind, to set before us as a proof of the weakness and insufficiency of reason to conduct men to the divine favour and happiness in a way of religion. And by this account of them, they seem to be so far degenerated from the rank of rational beings, and sunk into brutal life, that revelation itself could hardly recover them, if the christian religion were preached amongst them: For *Sophronius* has declared, that where some single attempts have been made of this kind, they have been without success.

Pithander. Though observation, experience, and matter of fact assure us, that the

solid clouds of darkness and irreligion which hang upon heathen nations, have been impenetrable to all the inward light of their own reason for many ages, yet the reformation of some of these nations by the light of the gospel, is also supported by matter of fact and experience; for true religion and morality have been actually introduced this way among some of these very stupid people. The savages of North America, that lie westward of some of the British plantations, and near New England, have several christian congregations, and the Danish missionaries of Tranquebar, in the East Indies, have done great things this way, toward the conversion of the heathens, in the Malabaric nations; though it must be confessed, these East Indians are not so utterly uncultivated and rude as the African Hottentots. But if those rude and uncultivated creatures are first addressed by men who are soft and obliging, and appear to seek only their good, and that by any number of them sent for this purpose; if they are treated in a rational way, and taught to exercise their reason upon the obvious things of the world, and led up to the Maker of all things, by the wisdom and power appearing in his works; if these savages are taught to read, and the scripture, which teaches morality and natural religion, as well as revealed, be made familiar to them, if it be frequently preached to them in conversation, as well as in public assemblies, if they have the New Testament always at hand, and they are taught how to use and understand it, this will lead their minds into a track of thinking and good reasoning about God and religion, about virtue and vice, and the rules of moral life: It will constantly furnish them not only with ideas, but with right ideas of these things, and suggest proper and just thoughts to their minds, vastly beyond what the uncertain reasonings of philosophers would do; and as soon as they begin to be convinced that this is a revelation from God, by introducing the traditional proofs of miracles and prophecies among them, their belief of it will be abundantly confirmed, and all their lessons before learned will have weight and authority upon their consciences, and will have a much superior influence upon them towards the reforming of their manners, and rectifying their hearts and lives, than if they were left to draw out the notions of God and a future state, and to trace out the rules of morality and religion, merely by themselves; since it is evident their fathers have never done it in many ages past, nor is it probable the children would ever do it in ages to come.

Logisto. Really, sir, according to your own representation of this matter, there must be many scores of teachers employed in this work, and yet the operation would be but slow.

Pithander. I grant it, sir, and it might take up many years to reduce such barbarous nations to the virtues of a moral and religious life, by any human methods we could use, even with the gospel of Christ in our hands: But yet the work would certainly be done with far greater speed, and much better success, and mankind would be led into a much more just, uniform, and perfect scheme of piety and virtue hereby, than if some philosophers were sent amongst them, just to set their thoughts into a track of reasoning upon these subjects, and leave them to find out the truths and duties of natural religion by their own natural powers, and by long trains of consequences: For I am very prone to think, that so wild a nation, having different capacities, different humours and inclinations, strong prejudices, appetites, and passions, besides all the concurrent avocations of nature, custom, folly, &c. would never be led *by their own reasonings* into any right notions of true religion and virtue, though their own intellectual faculties should be awakened and roused into exercise. But to facilitate this great and blessed work, some have sup-

posed, that whensoever the appointed time is come, for calling in the remainder of the heathen world to virtue and piety, and the faith of Christ, there will be a new and extraordinary effusion of the Spirit of God upon men for that purpose, and that the power of miracles and tongues shall attend the mission of the gospel through the barbarous nations, as in the ancient *days of pentecost*, when the apostles were sent to convert the world: For as you find in the narrative of these rude nations, that when they see any strange effect superior to all their notions of the power of nature, they are very ready to attribute it to some invisible power, to some unknown spirit; so when miracles shall be wrought amongst them, such as Christ and his apostles performed, at the same time that the doctrines of religion, and the rules of virtue are taught them, in a clear and easy manner, they will naturally be disposed to attend and receive these things with a sense of divine authority; and by the concurring influences of the grace of God, there will be a wondrous reformation wrought amongst them. But I forbid myself to proceed in such a digression as this: All that I insist upon at present is, that some wise and skilful preachers of the gospel, being sent among these savage nations, with the New Testament and the art of reading, will be a thousand times more likely to convert any of the rude and uncultivated tribes of mankind, than their own reasoning could ever be.

Logisto. But how hard soever it may be for reason to reform such savage countries as *Sophronius* has described in these his narratives, yet the rest of the heathen world are not to be concluded under the same characters of atheism, vice, and brutality, nor are they so hard to be reformed by reason.

Pithander. But I entreat you, sir, be pleased to remember, that you at first agreed, and undertook to maintain, that the reason of all mankind, and all nations of the earth, was sufficient for this purpose: And if it were not, then there is a necessity of revelation, at least for those nations where reason is not sufficient. Besides, if the reason of man be only sufficient, in some of the best of the heathen nations, to find out and practise such an acceptable religion, then your proposition concerning the sufficiency of human nature, is not universally true, since there are other nations in whom it is not sufficient.

Logisto. I am forced to confess, that the narratives which *Sophronius* has given of the state of these wretched countries, goes very far to destroy the good opinion that I had of the universal power of reason, and to incline me to give up the point in dispute very much in your favour. But pray, *Sophronius*, tell us a little what you think of the rest of the nations of the world, excepting such savage creatures as those, whose religion, or atheism, you have described, and in whom human nature is sunk into such a degenerate and senseless state?

Sophronius. Though there are not, perhaps, very many nations of the earth that are so far brutified as these are, whose customs I have been now relating, yet there are several other large countries in Africa and America, who come not very far behind them in gross ignorance of their Creator, in abominable superstitions and idolatries, in barbarity and shameful vices. The little sketches of account which we have of the inhabitants of Nova Zembla, in the north of Asia, and of New Holland, which lies south of Java in the East Indies, give us reason to expect, that we should find them every whit as destitute of the knowledge or practice of religion or virtue, as any of the savages of which I have already spoken, or perhaps more brutish than they. Europe, the best quarter of the world, has some countries shamefully ignorant; The tribes of men in Lapland, and even in the

northern parts of Russia itself, are blind and brutish enough: They have some superstitions among them, but no true religion. I have read in the writings of travellers, and I have been informed, by those who have lived in those countries, that the Russes are devout idolaters, but immoral men: They are very zealous to have images in their houses, even in their best rooms or parlours, and particularly that of St. Nicholas, who as they suppose governs the world, and besides him many of them seem to know no other God. They atone for great crimes by making many images of St. Nicholas, and dressing them up very fine. St. Nicholas always stands in some corner of their rooms, and to him they pay their devotions themselves, and expect their neighbours and visitants should pay it at first when they enter into the room: They profess christianity indeed, but mix it with such heathen superstitions, that it is not like the religion of the New Testament. They esteem it a very ungodly thing for any inhabitant to have no image or god in some part of the room where they receive their friends; and yet they have scarce any notion of the obligations of truth and honesty. They make no scruple to break the most solemn engagements and alliances, when it is for their interest. Falsehood, and deceit, and cheating is almost a universal custom and principle among them, where they can do it safely. And Scheffer's history of Lapland informs us, that if the tribes of the Laplanders, who are more uncultivated, are yet more honest, it is because they have no such store-houses and safe custody for their goods or properties, and that if they were false or thievish, there could be no safety or security to any of them in their possessions. It is mere self-preservation, and not a sense of duty, that makes honesty the custom of their country.

But whatsoever degrees of honesty they have, yet as for the religion of the Lapps, it is half or more than half heathen; for though they have received some notions of the true God, and of Jesus Christ, and his apostles, yet they worship their old gods, Thor and Stor-junkar, still: Thor is the god of thunder and lightning, who has power over life and death, and mankind, and is their chief deity; and Stor-junkar is god of the cattle, fish and birds, and gives them success in hunting and fishing: And these are worshipped under wretched images and rude figures, and anointed with the blood and fat of their sacrifices; their figures are drawn on their magical drums, and Christ and his apostles among them; and their superstitions are many, and extremely ridiculous. The custom of their ancestors is their highest, their most sacred and unalterable reason for all their follies, and even for their virtues too. What shall we say now of these worshippers of St. Nicholas and his images, or of Thor and Stor-junkar, these idolatrous Lapps, these national cheats of North Russia? Can we suppose, that any of these gross idolaters, or these devout and knavish Nicolaites, who neither pay what is due to the true God, or to man on earth, are fit for the presence of God and the blessedness of heaven? Their own reason lets them go on obstinately in these idolatries and knaveries from age to age, and from one end of a nation to the other, without remorse, repentance, or reformation. If their reason be sufficient to guide them, why are there no instances of recovery from these national vices and madnesses? It is true, some of them pretend to pieces and scraps of christianity; but even with these hints of twilight and glimmering assistances from the gospel, what has their reason done to recover them to virtue or real piety?

Let us travel from Northern Europe to the southern part of America. What has this self-sufficient reason done for the natives of Peru? And what for the inhabitants of Mexico, which, though it lies north of Peru, yet is much more to the south than the wild

nations I have been before describing? They maintained such horrid customs and practices amongst them, which passed for religion, when the Spaniards came first to make a prey of them, that must be infinitely offensive to the blessed God, rather than any way capable of obtaining his approbation or favour. It would be endless to repeat their various superstitions. I shall mention only the cruel and bloody rites, which were practised by the Mexicans in their human sacrifices, as Antonia de Herrara gives us an account, in the third volume of his General History of America. Many of these wretched victims which were taken in war, were successively carried up to an elevated place, where the high-priest stood, and were held fast by five men, one to each arm, one to each leg, and one to hold the head: Then this inhuman sacred butcher, who was trained up to the office, with a broad and sharp flint, instead of a knife, ripped up the breast of a man, tore out the heart reeking with his hands, and shewed it to the sun, offering him the heat and steam of it: Then he turned to the idol or image, which was set near him, and threw the bloody heart in his face: And the bodies of these sacrifices thus murdered in a long and dismal succession, were tumbled down from that elevated place of slaughter, and were eaten in a festival by those who had taken them prisoners. Sometimes, says he, these sacrifices, after a victory, have arisen to many thousands in all the country; for this was practised by all the nations near Mexico. Why does their self-sufficient reason permit them to practise these mischievous impieties, and call it all religion?

If we survey those countries of Asia, where the gospel was never preached, or never received, how little of true religion is found among the people of the continent, or the numerous islands; I mean, religion that can please the true God?

China itself is really a polite and ingenious nation, and their natural reason teaches them a thousand fine contrivances and manufactures, which relate to their present life; yet how little has it taught them that relates to the true God, or the life to come? They are so vain and conceited of their wit and ingenuity, that they say, *the Europeans have one eye, the Chinese have two, and all the rest of the world are blind.* They boast themselves to be the brightest and most rational people under the heavens; yet have they wandered into gross darkness and wild superstitions, as father Le Comte at large informs us. This country is supposed to be peopled very early, by the children or posterity of Noah, and they retained the knowledge of the sovereign Lord of heaven, or the supreme Spirit of heaven and earth, and offered sacrifice to him anciently, even seven sorts of animals. Their learned men tell us, that for two thousand years there were no idols nor statues seen among them; and great morality and virtue were practised through the whole nation. But now they generally adore an idol, or fancied god, whom they call Fo, as the only god of the world. This was brought from the Indies, by computation of times, thirty-two years after the death of Christ. This poison began at court, and corrupted every town: The nation is now infected with idolatry, and become a monstrous receptacle for all sort of errors.

It is hard to recount what strange fables, superstitions, opinions about the transmigration of souls, idolatry, and downright atheism, divide the inhabitants of the land, and at this present have a strong mastery over them. The ape, the elephant, and the dragon, have been worshipped in several places, under pretence that the god Fo had been successively transmigrated into those animals. China is now the most superstitious of all nations, with all her boasted superiority of sense and reason: She has lost the true God,

and gone on continually to increase the number of her idols, till one may see all sorts of them in their temples. Yet if they worship an idol a great while, and they do not obtain what they desire, they load him with reproaches, and with stripes, they tie him with cords, pluck him down from his seat, drag him along the streets through mud and dunghills, to punish him. Lately there was one of these idols called to account before a Judge, and was punished by perpetual banishment, and had his temple destroyed, as being useless to the kingdom: And the reason of his punishment was, his not saving the life of a person, whose recovery their bonzes, or priests had promised in his name: Yet instead of coming to more true knowledge of the weakness of their gods, the people grow more blind every day, notwithstanding all their sufficiency of reason to lead them into truth, and all the boasted writings of their wise philosopher Confucius among them. These bonzes indeed give the people many good instructions in *rules of virtue;* but they take care to recommend themselves to their liberality: "Entertain and nourish up, say they, the bonzes; build them monasteries and temples, that their prayers and voluntary penances may obtain for you exemption from that punishment which your sins have deserved. Burn paper gilt and washed with silver, and habits made of stuff and silk: All these in the other world shall be turned into real gold and silver, and into true and substantial garments, which shall be given to your deceased fathers faithfully, who will make use of them as they have occasion. If you do not regard these commands, you shall, after your death, be cruelly tormented, and exposed to several metempsychoses, or transmigrations; that is to say, you shall be born in the shape of rats, horses, mules, and all other creatures." This last point makes a great impression upon their minds.

I remember, says father Le Comte, that being in the province of Xansi, I was sent for to christen a sick person: It was an old man of threescore and ten, who lived upon a small pension which the emperor had given him. When I came into the chamber, "O my good father, says he, how much am I obliged to you, who are going to deliver me from a great deal of torment? *Baptism, answered I, does not only deliver from the torment of hell, but intitles us to the enjoyment of a place in paradise: O how happy will it be for you to go to heaven, eternally to live in the presence of God!* I do not, said the sick man, understand what you mean, nor, perhaps, have I explained my meaning clearly to you: You know I have lived a long time upon the emperor's bounty: The bonzes, who are perfectly well acquainted with all the transactions of the other world, assure me, that I shall be obliged, after my death, by way of recompence for my pension, to serve him, and that my soul will infallibly go into one of his post-horses, to carry dispatches from court through all the province. They have therefore been advising me to mind my duty in that new state; not to stumble, nor kick, nor bite, nor hurt any one: Run well, and eat little, and be patient, say they, and you may move the gods to compassion, who often of a good beast make at length a person of quality, or a considerable mandarin. I protest, father, the very thoughts of it make me quake; it never comes into my mind but I tremble; yet I dream of it every night, and sometimes, methinks, in my sleep I am already in the harness, ready to run at the first jerk of the postillion. Then I awake in a great sweat, and half mad, scarcely knowing whether I am a man or a horse. But alas! what will be my sorrow when this will be no more a dream, but a reality. This therefore, father, is the course I took. They tell me, that those of your religion are not subject to those changes; that men are always men, and are in the other world of the same kind as they are here. I beg of you therefore to receive me among you. I know your religion

is hard to observe; yet if it had ten times more difficulties, I am ready to embrace it; and whatsoever trouble it put me to, I had rather be a christian than be turned into a beast." The father Le Comte, however, gave him a little better instruction, and, as he tells us, had the comfort to see him die a good christian. But in the main he assures us, the superstitions of the people are so numberless, that he does not believe any nation under the sun is so full of whimsies as China.

And pray, *Logisto*, how much wiser or happier should we have been in this island of Great Britain, notwithstanding this self-sufficiency of our reason, if christianity had never come amongst us? It is true, we have not many memoirs left of the religion of our ancestors in the days of heathenism. Strabo tells us, that the Britons worshipped Ceres, and her daughter Proserpina above any other gods: The daughter is known to be the queen of hell, and the mother a sort of earthly or infernal goddess. Whether these were originally British deities, or whether they were introduced, together with these names of them, by the Romans, is hard to say. The Druids were our ancient priests and philosophers, and in many things, they were judges also in civil affairs. The doctrine of *transmigration of souls*, was one of their tenets, and that gave the people courage in war, as Lucan tells us; for the "populi quos despicit arctos," as cited yesterday by *Pithander*, those northern people, are supposed to be the Britons. Their religion was much the same with that of the Gauls; for Cæsar tells us, that the doctrine of their Druids came from Britain; and we are informed, that *they offered human sacrifices* as well as others, and consulted the bowels of men upon the altar, to learn the fortune of war and the success of their enterprizes. Had you and I, sir, been sent into the world by providence in that age, would our reason ever have worked its way through all these loads of superstition? Would our native powers have found out the true God, and his worship, amidst these national follies and crimes, and traced out the way to his favour in a future state? Perhaps I might have been the victim to-day upon some impious and bloody altar, and *Pithander*, or even *Logisto*, might have been the priestly Druid ripping open my breast, and searching out futurities by the beating of my heart, or the colour of my liver. Or perhaps we might have been now all three worshipping the north German and Saxon idols: Thor, the god of thunder, whence our Thursday comes, or Tuisco, the god of war, who gave Tuesday its name, and been prostrating our bodies in the dust before their images with vain and senseless ceremony. Our great grandfathers had reasoning powers as well as we, and yet they were blind idolaters: And notwithstanding all our present politeness, and pretensions to reason and refinement, we might have still, in every age, departed further from the true God, as the polite Chinese have done, and given up our souls, and our lives, and our future hopes, to as many wild and wretched varieties of whimsy and madness. Blessed be the day, when *the light of the gospel* broke in upon us, when *the name of Christ*, and his religion, was published in our island, and the way of salvation was made known to our fathers!

But let us come to the civilized countries of ancient Rome and Greece, and the Lesser Asia, where learning had its seat and empire for some ages, where the reason of mankind seems to have exerted itself in its best effects, and made the most evident discoveries: And what can we suppose concerning the common inhabitants of the towns and villages in Asia, Greece, and Italy, and all their pretences to religion? Has their reason led them in any safe road to heaven? Can you yourself imagine them to be such as paid due honour to God, the true God, the Creator and Governor of the world, in any tolerable

degree? Can you suppose that their religious notions, their devout practices, their idolatries, ceremonies, and superstitions, are fitted to refine the souls of men, and prepare them for such a heaven as consists in the contemplation and love of the blessed God, and his eternal worship and service? Were their religious affairs ever conducted and practised in such a manner as to procure the favour of God for sinful creatures, and to bring them into a state of reconciliation and friendship with their Maker? Were the devotions, and sacrifices, and ridiculous rites of their national religions, the right way to heavenly blessedness?

Suppose a few philosophers amongst them owned and acknowledged *the one true God*, yet many even of the reputed masters of wisdom and philosophy disbelieved the being of a God, or made him one and the same being or substance with the world, that is, the universe of things. They were engaged in endless quarrels what God was, and whether he was matter or mind. Some of them declared roundly, that they knew him not: And those of them who believed there was one Almighty Maker of all things, an all-wise, and powerful, and beneficent Being, who made and ruled the world, yet kept it too much confined to their schools, and concealed it from the bulk of mankind. *They held this first truth in unrighteousness.* There are scarce any of all the sects of philosophers, who do not often talk of gods in the plural number: It is plain that some of them did it, because they did not know how many Gods there were: And those who believed there was but one true God, yet used the common language of polytheists, because they would not, or they durst not, publish this unity of God amongst the common people, Socrates has been said to lose his life for being too free in the defence of it, in opposition to their public polytheism and idolatry, though some say he complied with them too. Cicero says, that *it was hard to find out the true God, the Parent or Creator of the world, and if you should find him, it would be very unlawful to make him known to the common people.* His words are these: "Illum quasi parentem hujus universitatis invenire difficile: et cum inveneris, in dicare in vulgus nefas;" *Lib. de Univers.* page 2. and to the same purpose in *Lib.* ii. *de natura deorum.* And by the way we may take notice, that the same great and learned writer complains of the weakness of human nature to guide itself without the cultivation of reason by learning and philosophy. *Tusc. Quæst. Lib.* iii. And thus he leaves the bulk of the world in a state of unguided wandering.

As for these philosophers themselves, as much as some of them knew of the true God, and the way of worshipping him with a pure heart and pure hands, rather than by their national superstitions, yet how honourably do they talk of the mysteries and ceremonies of their gods, and of the piety of those who observed these superstitious rites, and who worshipped the numerous idols of their country? Marcus Antoninus, one of the very best of them, who was a philosopher and an emperor, so far prides himself in this respect to his idol gods, that he thence expected safety to attend him, and success against the rebellion of Cassius: *We have not been such negligent worshippers of the gods*, said he, *as to fear that Cassius shall get the victory:* And indeed he followed the superstitions of Rome, and of other countries, with diligence. There were scarce any of them all but complied with the national worship of many gods, Mars, Bacchus, Apollo, Neptune, Jupiter, Juno, Minerva, Diana, Venus, and the rest of that ridiculous rabble of gods and goddesses. The bulk of the nations worshipped them in their houses, and at their temples, thoughtless of *the one true God;* for they knew little or nothing of him. Epictetus himself, who perhaps paid the greatest regard to virtue among all the philosophers before Antoninus,

and whose life, in other respects, was more blameless than any of them, and who says some very good things concerning our respect to the gods, chapter xxxviii. yet he advises men *to worship the gods, as the country does where they dwell.** Let the heathens boast then of their Epictetus and Antonine, the two brightest names among them: Their ignorance of the true God, and their abominable idolatries and superstitions, cast a dismal blemish on their virtues, and almost destroy all their pretences to true piety. Can you ever suppose, sir, that the blessed and holy God, the supreme Maker and Governor of heaven and earth, can accept of such sort of devotions; of drink-offerings and sacrifices, and various rites of ridiculous invention, and such as are paid to false gods, to idols, and not to himself? Are these the people that he will bless with his own favour and love, in a better world, who lavish out their superstitions, according to the wild customs of every country, and adore things that are not God, and never take any care to learn his true nature, or to glorify the one true God amongst men?

The best of them, *when they knew* the true *God, they did not glorify him as God*, as St. Paul assures us, *nor were thankful* for the common blessings they received from him; *but they turned his glory into shame*, and in his room worshipped sometimes *birds, beasts, and creeping things*, images of wood or stone, or their own fancied heroes, some of whom, according to their own account, were murderers and adulterers, translated into heaven after their death. And no wonder if the lives and the manners of their common worshippers were scandalous and impure, while these were the characters they gave to their gods. Here and there, indeed, among the philosophers, and especially the platonists, or pythagoreans, and a stoic or two, you find a handsome speech, or perhaps a discourse concerning the nature of God, and the imitation of him in his amiable perfections; but most of them, as I hinted, *held this truth*, even in their own hearts, *in unrighteousness*, and very few ever carefully practised in religion, according to their own best sentiments. Nor had they generally any established notion of a future state of rewards and punishments, according to the behaviour of men in this life. It is granted, that a few of them, particularly Plato and his followers, have mentioned such a thing; but Aristotle and his disciples declared a future state to be obscure and uncertain, τὸ μέλλον ἀφανὲς. And several of the philosophers ridiculed not only the doctrine of the poets concerning the Elysian fields and Tartarus, but roundly denied any life after this. Some of them indeed, *viz.* the epicureans and the stoics, spoke of the change of the same atoms of matter into new forms of men and beasts in following ages: But this was a sorry sort of reviviscence without the same consciousness. Many believed the doctrine of transmigration of souls, as *Pithander* has shewn; and others among them could not allow the real punishments of the wicked hereafter, since they imagined, *that God was never angry, nor would do hurt to men.* This, Cicero tells us, was the common opinion of all the philosophers: "Hoc commune est omnium philosophorum nunquam nec irasci Deum nec nocere." *De Officiis, Lib.* iii. *Sect.* 27. How then can he punish the vilest of sinners?

The stoics did not think that the platonic argument for future rewards and punishments, drawn from the unequal distributions of good and evil things in this life, was just or strong, because they did not allow riches, health, ease of body, &c. to be real goods; nor pain, sickness, poverty, loss, oppression, &c. to be real evils: And therefore they

* Σπένδειν δε καὶ θύειν καλὰ τὰ πάτρια ἑκάστοτε, or ἑκάστοις, προσήκει. Epictet. cap. xxxvii. It is proper for us to offer drink-offerings and sacrifices, to the gods whom he had been speaking of, every where according to the custom of the country.

thought the justice and wisdom of the gods might be sufficiently vindicated in the distributions of providence, without running to the doctrine of a future state, after this life: And on this account, Antoninus himself, as well as other stoics, talks so doubtfully about it, in several places of his writings. *Think of Socrates, Cicero, Severus, the Cæsars, where are they now all? Any where, or no where? All worldly things are but as the smoke, or indeed mere nothing;* Book X. Sect. 31. He has many such sort of speeches. That great philosopher did not know, whether the soul goes from the body by way of extinction, or dispersion of its parts, or continuation of life in some other state or place, though he pronounces it *blessed to be always ready for it, without reluctance;* Book XI. Sect. 3. And indeed, since they made virtue its own sufficient reward, and made vice its own sufficient punishment, and called it the slavery of the soul, their philosophy did not so plainly lead them to make any future rewards or punishments necessary. Cicero, who was one of the greatest geniuses of antiquity, and did not confine himself to any sect, but took out of all what pleased him best, was so little satisfied with all the proofs of the immortality of the soul and its future existence, that his vast reading and his own invention could furnish him with, that he frequently professes his uncertainty and doubts about it. When he had reckoned up several opinions, he adds, " Harum sententiarum quæ vera sit, deus aliquis videret. *Some god may see which of all these opinions is true.*" In which short sentence, he shews at once his own doubts both about the future existence of the soul and about the unity of God, or rather supposes more gods than one.

Where now are these agreed principles of natural religion, of the knowledge and worship of the true God, and of certain rewards and punishments in another world for virtue and vice? Were they taught with constancy and certainty any where but in Plato's school, much less in any number of schools of the philosophers? How little agreement was there among them about these principles! If their reason was so far sufficient to find out and practise such a religion as would lead them into the favour of God and happiness, how came it to pass, that there should be never found any fixed systems amongst them of better rules of piety and religion, than they have generally proposed to the world, and a more rational and uniform account of their principles and practices of what relates to God, and another world?

Logisto. I do not pretend to have read over all the heathen philosophers; but I have been informed, that there is no precept of true religion or morality which is not to be found in their writings.

Sophronius, I grant, many such precepts are to be found; but it will be very hard to find them all there. Give me leave to enquire a few things here:—1. Is it not a precept of morality or true religion, that all our actions should be done to the honour of our Maker? Where is this to be found in precept or practice among the heathen philosophers? Rom. i. 21. *When they knew God, they glorified him not as God.*—2. Is it not an excellent precept or rule of true religion, that sinners should draw near to God in humble worship, acknowledging their offences, condemning themselves, mourning for their folly, asking pardon of God, and desiring assistance from him against any future temptations, or a deliverance from them? Now is there any of the philosophers among the heathens that has prescribed to us this practice?—3. If with much labour and pains of reading we could find out and collect the several rules of a system of natural religion and virtue, here and there scattered and hinted among all the philosophers, yet what one philosopher has delivered them all? Much less can we suppose the reason of any one single man

alone could trace them all out: Nor is there any book left us by all the heathens in the least degree comparable to that of the New Testament, even to teach us the truths and duties of natural religion.—4. Among these principles and rules of religion, and virtue, which lie scattered in the writings of the philosophers, are there not some which are doubted, and some directly opposed by others of these heathen sages? What endless disputes were found in their schools about *the chief good* itself, and the way to attain it, *about God himself, about good and evil, sin and virtue, present and future happiness?* Thus the light of reason, in these great masters of it, has left matters of such supreme importance as topics of dispute for their readers, rather than as authentic rules of practice: And of how little use could this be to all the illiterate world! So that mankind is still left at a vast uncertainty, since not one philosopher had any just authority to impose his principles and rules upon the rest of mankind. I add yet—5. That if they had been never so perfect in the discovery of the rules of duty, yet they have never given motives actually and practically sufficient to enforce the practice of them, as *Pithander* has shewn already.

Very poor and feeble must their motives be for the practice of sincere piety, and the pure worship of the only true God, when it was opposed, rather than encouraged, by some of the greatest of their wise men, who had any power or influence in the state. That ingenious writer, Mr. Jackson, in his late Answer to Christianity as Old as the Creation, page 14. tells us, that *All the very best systems of human laws among the gentiles established superstition and idolatry*, as may be seen from Plato's fourth and seventh Book of Laws, and also from Cicero's second Book of Laws throughout. A foul blemish upon the reason and religion of two of the greatest men of heathenism. The utmost, therefore, that I can say for them is this, that the reasoning powers of these polite parts of the heathen world had very little, if any thing more than a sort of speculative or notional sufficiency, for true religion and future happiness; for its best rules were very imperfect, its motives very feeble, and scarce ever effectual in fact and practice; and wheresoever they were effectual in here-and-there a particular person or his family, it was rather owing to the traditions they had of some divine revelation, or to an acquaintance with some doctrines of the Jews in their various dispersions. And these dispersions of the Jews did Providence ordain for the preservation, or rather for the recovery, of the knowledge of the one God, and his worship and religion among the countries of heathenism, who had no remarkable revelation made to themselves, or had lost it perhaps for several generations.

Logisto. But if I mistake not, sir, some ingenious modern writers have informed us, that human reason has determined, with the greatest ease, what opinions are true and false in all the main articles and duties of religion: They assure us, that heathen * deists generally agreed in the belief of *one supreme self-existent agent or God*, and of *his providence in the government of mankind;* that they agreed in *the unalterable obligations of virtue*, and *the displeasure of God against all vice and impiety;* that there were *rewards for good men*, and *punishments for the wicked in a future state:* That *God was to be worshipped with a pious heart*, and with a conscience free from sin; that *justice and goodness* were to be practised for their own excellency and delight, as well as in imitation of *the*

* But how few were these heathen deists, if you except the Platonists? The rest were generally atheists, or polytheists, or doubters about the one true God.

blessed God: And they teach us, that all but atheists agreed in these great and necessary points of religion.

Sophronius. Then I may justly infer, that nine-tenths of the heathen world were atheists, with all their boasted sufficiency of reason; for it is pretty evident, that there was not one-tenth part of the heathen world, in the days of the Grecian philosophers, who agreed to hold and profess all these principles, *Logisto*, which you have now reckoned up. I would yet farther observe, that though any of our ingenious writers should give a loose to their encomiums upon human reason, and tell us how far some of the heathen philosophers were led by it in their discoveries of the true God and his worship, though they should make a sort of saints of them, yet we have no reason to infer, in large and general terms, concerning the heathen nations, this was the scheme of their religion; nor should they tempt us to suppose these were the general sentiments of all the ancient gentiles, and that this was the sense of mankind, without a revelation. How wide this encomium even of the heathen philosophers is from strict truth, we have observed already. And yet if these things concerning the philosophers had been strictly true, we should neither make nor believe any universal and unreasonable inductions from a few single instances of philosophers, in opposition to the common multitude and bulk of mankind, in towns, cities, and villages? Let us remember that the common people, even in these polite nations, received their religion rather from their priests and their rulers, than from their philosophers; they much more willingly and readily learned, and more universally practised the impious and ridiculous idolatries and superstitions of their country, than ever they would hearken to the moral or self-denying dictates and abstract reasonings of their philosophers; for princes and priests had much more authority. Now many of these superstitions and doctrines of their gods tended to corrupt their moral principles, and destroy and kill the very seeds of virtue within them. How very few among them had any true notions of piety!

Alas! sir, to make such general conclusions of the goodness of heathen religion, and sufficiency of human reasonings in all mankind to find it out, there ought to be many more instances of the knowledge and belief of the true God, and his spiritual worship, &c. and that among the heathens of Africa and America, as well as Europe; and among the bulk of the inhabitants of Greece and Asia-Minor, as well as the few philosophers: Whereas it is evident, that the gross of the heathen world, even in the cultivated and polite parts of it, were abominably overrun with shameful ignorance, idolatry, and immorality, profaneness, and superstition: And in some of the rude and unpolished nations, there is scarce any thing but stupidity and error, darkness and madness, instead of truth, sobriety, and goodness.

While in the learned part of the world, the poets and the priests taught these wild superstitions as things sacred and divine, while the rulers commanded the observance of them, and the philosophers themselves complied with them, what can we suppose the people would do but believe in the same deities, worship them with the same ceremonies, and imitate their superiors in their religion, though it were never so ridiculous and immoral? And as for the rude and unlearned nations and tribes of mankind, while their ancestors before them, and their companions all around them, gave themselves up to impious, and immoral, and shameful customs, and they were never taught to think for themselves, or to reason upon the subject, what can be expected, but that they should universally *corrupt themselves*, and live from age to age *without God* or goodness? The

narratives which St. Paul gives us in his epistles of the gentile nations through which he travelled, and the accounts of our later travellers, conspire to assure us of the most wretched and deplorable state of mankind there, in respect of religion and virtue. This is so copious a theme, *Logisto*, that one might talk upon it whole hours with pertinence and justice, and, one would think, to the conviction of those who are willing to hearken to truth. But I know in whose presence I speak: I am well apprised, that the person to whom I address myself needs no more than short hints of these matters to refresh his own memory, and give him a compendious view of the things which he himself has been well acquainted with, in his own converse with the ancient writers of Rome and Greece, as well as the accounts which are given us of the more barbarous nations.

Logisto. I confess, dear sir, I am almost overpowered with conviction by the short account you have given us of these affairs, and the glaring light in which you have set them: But yet still there remains some great difficulties upon my mind, which arise from other arguments which I have heard and read on this subject. Shall I propose them now, my friends? or shall we appoint to meet again more early next Wednesday in the afternoon, and finish our conferences on this subject?

Pithander. Indeed, sir, I fear we have too much work upon our hands to be all finished this evening. And since you are so obliging, *Logisto*, to invite us to such a peaceful and pleasant retreat, and since I persuade myself *Sophronius* will be so good as to afford us a few hours more of his company, for my part, I know not how I can better employ my time than in endeavouring, in such society, to search after and to communicate truth. It is indeed the appointed business and station of my life to be a teacher to others, yet I take pleasure, gentlemen, to come hither and learn.

Sophronius. But why will ye not please, my friends, to favour me with a visit, and let your last conference do my parlour the honour of finishing this friendly controversy? I will not pretend to such an elegant and spacious garden as *Logisto* has, nor to so neat and private a retreat for conversation, as this wherein we are now entertained; but you shall be attended with the best accommodations which my dwelling will afford; and if you will give yourselves the trouble to ascend to my study, we shall there be sufficiently retired from all other company.

Logisto. I doubt not, *Sophronius*, of the sincerity of your request, nor the conveniency of your library, for such a friendly conference: But since you have favoured us thus far with your happy assistance in a debate which *Pithander* and myself had appointed here in this garden, I cannot with any satisfaction permit the scene to be altered. Perhaps it may seem a degree of incivility to desire a visit from you so often without a return; yet I promise you, sir, I will write myself down indebted to you for every such favour, and when we begin any new subject of debate, *Sophronius* shall appoint the place.

Sophronius. Then since it is the pleasure of *Logisto* to have it so, without any more ceremony, we will attend him here next Wednesday.

Pithander. I agree, sir, to your proposal. I can never be in an ill situation at either of your houses, amidst the honour of such company.

Logisto. Gentlemen, I own the obligation, and am your very humble servant.

THE THIRD CONFERENCE.

In the days that passed after the last meeting, *Logisto* had been reviewing several books which have been written in vindication of the sufficiency of human reason to conduct men to happiness in a way of religion; and as he had renewed his own difficulties, so he had furnished his memory with some of their strongest arguments; but he found none so hard to answer, as that great and important one, which is derived from the wisdom, the equity, and the goodness of God; upon which account he resolved to reserve this to the last. When his company were come, he led them down to the usual place of learned conversation, and began the conference thus:

Logisto. The only thing that remains before us, gentlemen, is, that I should propose some arguments, drawn from the reason of things, and from the nature of God and man, why it appears necessary that the principle of human reason should be sufficient, in all mankind, to guide and conduct them to the belief and practice of such a religion, wherein they may obtain the favour of God, and happiness in a future state.

Pithander. I wait with some impatience, sir, to hear these arguments of yours, which you have so often intimated: And yet it may not be improper, before you produce them, to consider, what is the particular proposition your arguments can possibly prove, or what it is you can expect from them. Will you please to remember, sir, it has been plainly proved and determined already, and agreed in our past debate, as a certain matter of fact, that there are several large countries of heathenism, wherein the inhabitants have not reason sufficient to guide them into true religion, considering their vast prejudices and aversions to God and goodness; much less is it sufficient to enable them to practise it; that is, according to the distinction of our worthy friend *Sophronius*, that though there may be in them a remote, natural, and speculative sufficiency for this purpose, yet their reasoning powers are so poor and low, so unpractised, and so much perverted by a thousand errors, evil customs, vicious propensities, and wilful ignorance, that they are not practically and experimentally sufficient for this great design. This has been abundantly confirmed by the melancholy and yet entertaining accounts *Sophronius* hath given us of African and American heathens. Now I humbly hope, sir, you will not suppose that any of your arguments can destroy plain matter of fact, nor prove that to be sufficient, which has before been plainly declared and proved, and agreed to be insufficient.

Logisto. I must acknowledge, *Pithander*, I know not how to oppose what you say. It seems to be plainly proved, that reason in these savages is not a sufficient guide. All that I can pretend, therefore, is only to shew, that if human reason is not in fact sufficient, even practically sufficient for this purpose, yet at least it ought to be practically sufficient; and perhaps my arguments will prove it.

Pithander. Pray, sir, be so good as to inform me, what you mean by saying it ought to be sufficient? Will any of your arguments teach the all-wise God what he ought to have done, and in what other and better condition he ought to have placed mankind, than he has seen fit to place them in? Will your arguments give wisdom to your Maker, or instruct him in rules of justice? Or can any of your reasonings inform him, what superior talents and happier circumstances he ought to have bestowed upon his creatures?

Have you courage enough to reprove or arraign the conduct of the supreme Governor of the world towards his African or American subjects? Is it right, *Logisto*, to talk at this rate? Or is it safe to venture on such an unequal contest? What else can you mean, sir, by affirming that reason ought to be sufficient, but this, *viz.* that God ought to have given men better faculties, or he ought to have bestowed upon them clearer light, and better helps, or ought to have brought them into the world with greater advantages than his wisdom has thought fit to do: And what is this, but telling the all-wise God he has acted weakly, or charging the God of justice that he has dealt unjustly, or accusing *the Father of Mercies*, that he has acted cruelly toward his creatures?

Logisto. I confess, good sir, that you confound me a little with these enquiries. I have no such hardiness of soul, as to dare to reprove my Maker, whom I adore with the most profound veneration; and I do acknowledge, that whatsoever he does, must be right and just. And yet there are arguments which seem to prove, that man, who, as you agree, is to be tried and judged in the other world for his behaviour in this, should some way or other have sufficient powers given him to know and fulfil his duty: Otherwise, men would be excusable in their greatest superstitions and immoralities, as being destitute, by the necessity of their circumstances, of a sufficient guide in matters of religion and virtue: And this is the first argument which I desire leave to offer upon this head, as a difficulty which I cannot solve.

Pithander. Perhaps, sir, it is an effectual relief to this difficulty, if we suppose mankind to be furnished with such reasoning powers as are, in the nature of things, and in a remote sense, sufficient to guide and conduct men in their religious affairs: For the neglect of using and improving these rational powers, is greatly criminal: And it is this universal neglect of using them well, that renders them practically insufficient. If they employ not their reason in their most important concerns, you will grant it is their own fault; and this renders them condemnable for the neglect or abuse of it, and for the errors and vices proceeding from such an unreasonable conduct of life. This is confessed by the writers of your own side of the question. Besides, the reasoning faculty and the remains of conscience, which are found even in the most savage tribes of mankind, may be called practically sufficient, though not to conduct to happiness completely, yet to have taught them much more of the first principles of virtue and religion, than most of them either know or practise; and thus to have withheld them from their grossest immoralities and superstitions.

Yet further, reason may teach them the duties of an innocent man, but not to recover a sinner to God's favour. The obligations which their reason and conscience might lay on them to practise duty, may be clear and strong as far as they go; and yet these may not be sufficient to bring sinners to the favour of God and eternal happiness. Devils are under clear and strong obligation to love God, and to repent and obey him, through the dictates of a rational nature; but this rational nature is not sufficient to bring them to happiness and the favour of God. It is granted, the heathens have great hinderances; but great as they are, they are not so insurmountable, but that most or all of them might have arrived at much superior degrees of knowledge and practice in religion, than what any of them have actually arrived at, if they had not been so shamefully and criminally negligent, so exceeding fond of error and sin, and so lazy in their search after truth and duty. Therefore they are by no means excusable, as you express it, in their greatest immoralities.

Give me leave, sir, to represent this matter by a plain similitude. Suppose Anergus, a slave, to have a remote natural capacity sufficient to trace out all the demonstrations in Euclid: Then you consequently must suppose him also to have a proximate and practical sufficiency to trace out some of the first and plainest of them: Criton, his master, commands him to demonstrate all the propositions there, or to practise all the problems; but he will not so much as set about the first and plainest of them: Is not Anergus greatly criminal? If he would have traced out the first, he might perhaps find a growing capacity, and a proximate and practical sufficiency to demonstrate the next, and the next in succession, till he came to the last. Is he not chargeable then with the guilt of not demonstrating and practising the whole series, even though he never actually had a practical and proximate sufficiency of reason or ability to grasp the deepest and most complicated theorems, or to perform the hardest problems, because he was lazy and thoughtless, and would not apply himself to the easiest? You know, sir, how to apply this to the case in hand.

Logisto. Then you do not assert, that their reason is practically insufficient to have taught them the chief part of their duty, or to have enabled them to perform it, if they had been well inclined to it, and sincerely diligent in their attempts to their utmost?

Pithander. No, sir, I assert no such thing: For it is their great and universal sloth and negligence, and disinclination both to learn and perform their duty, that is one of the chief things that renders their reasoning powers thus insufficient in a practical sense: It is owing to their powerful prejudices, their evil moral habits, and their strong aversion to God and virtue, that they do not exercise their reasoning powers to the utmost of their capacity: And it is by this means they continue in darkness, guilt, and death: Whereas if they had a real inclination, and sincere desire, to search out and perform their duty to God and man, if they obeyed every secret dictate of conscience, every hint of truth that arose within them, and used their natural light, both as to belief and practice, to the utmost of their power, God would never be wanting to any of his creatures; I am persuaded, he would have graciously accepted the utmost that their reasoning powers could perform; or, if it were necessary, he would have given such well-disposed persons greater light and greater strength, to learn and fulfil the necessary parts of religion; *for to him that hath, shall be given;* that is, greater helps shall be given to him that improves what lesser talents God has entrusted him with. But the case of these brutal creatures seems to be represented in the latter end of that text, Luke viii. 18. *From him that hath not, shall be taken away that which he hath,* or seemeth to have; that is, those who improve not the feeble light that is given them, even those feeble glimmerings of light shall be taken from them, and by the righteous judgment of God they shall be left in deep and utter darkness: And thus they are greatly culpable, though their reasoning powers are practically insufficient.

Logisto. Very well, my friend; I can hear this with more patience, since you impute the crime to men's own abuse of their rational powers, and not to God their Creator. I proceed therefore to a second argument, and forgive me if I express it in pretty strong terms: Does not the great and blessed God equally *behold all the dwellers on the earth,* free from partiality and prejudice? And can he be supposed to make some people his favourites, without any consideration of their merits, and merely because they believe certain propositions, and practise certain duties, which he has revealed, and which are taught and known generally in that country where they happen to be born; while others,

and that a far greater number, shall from age to age want this favour of God, because they are destined to be born and live in places where such propositions and duties were never revealed, where they are not known, and are very hard or impossible to be found out, and for that reason they are not likely to believe and practise them? What can more represent God as an arbitrary and partial being, than thus to suppose that he scarce vouchsafes to bring the means of happiness within the reach of so great a part of his creatures, while he has given it so plentifully to others?

Pithander. This speech of yours, sir, will require an answer at large; and I am glad you give me occasion to speak my thoughts freely on this subject. When you use the words partiality and prejudice, you seem to consider God as a Governor and a Judge, distributing rewards or punishments to his creatures partially, and not exactly according to their former behaviour; and in this respect I must affirm, God beholds all men equally, and acts without prejudice or partiality in his retribution of the righteous and the wicked: In this sense, *God is no respecter of persons;* the master and the servant, the prince and the subject, the learned and the ignorant, shall receive a recompence according to their works. But when we speak of God as an original proprietor and possessor of his own blessings, he may freely distribute his favours in a greater or less degree amongst his creatures, as he pleases, without any charge of prejudice or partiality. And this is sufficiently visible in the whole of his providence, and that among the brutal creation as well as the rational. Are there not many of the birds, and beasts of the earth, and fishes of the sea, that in their several portions of sensitive good or evil, ease or pain, are greatly distinguished from each other, merely by the hand of their Creator? Here is one flock of sheep frighted and worried daily, and some of them miserably torn to death, and destroyed, and the rest of them wounded or maimed by a wolf or a bear, while other flocks grow up, perhaps, for several years, enjoying the plentiful pasture that the earth provides for them. Here is one nest of doves plundered by a hawk, and drenched in blood, while twenty of their neighbours breed up their young in all security. Here is a brood of young wild turkeys hatched in a later or more unkindly season, crippled with the cold, and languishing out their lives under lingering infirmities, while others that were brought into life a month or two sooner, enjoy all the blessings suited to their nature, and continue in this enjoyment, perhaps, for several years. What is this difference to be imputed to, but the will of Providence?

A thousand such sort of accidents happen not only to birds and beasts, to fishes, and every kind of brute animals, but to men; and that not merely to the individuals of mankind, but sometimes to tribes, and families, and nations. Some are actually born under the power of tyrants, and they commence and finish their lives in tiresome slavery and bondage: Others exult for seventy years in free, and rich, and plenteous circumstances, while their neighbours are distressed from their infancy with poverty and pain, and drag on life to old age under many calamities. Children of the same parents shall be oftentimes widely distinguished in the blessings or the sorrows of nature, by the mere providence of God, when, perhaps, they are equally virtuous, or, perhaps, equally wicked. Some are suffered to become blind, or to be born cripples in their limbs, and in their understanding too, while others of the same village, or the same house, perhaps, rejoice in the pleasures and the vigorous powers of mind and body. How comes it to pass, sir, that your genius is so bright and sparkling, while your neighbour Hebetudo, with all the expences of his education, could never construe an ode in Horace, and scarce

understands his catechism? Whence is it, that some families are so poor in their intellectuals, and propagate sloth and dulness for half a dozen generations? And yet perhaps at last, a hero, a philosopher, or a great divine, shall arise amongst them, and surprise the world! Tell me, *Logisto*, who makes the difference in all these instances? Will you say, it happens thus according to the course of things, and the succession of natural causes? But pray inform me, who set natural causes at work in this manner, which should produce such very distinguishing circumstances, and that too, perhaps, in persons whose moral character is the same? Or why is their infancy so much distinguished by blessings or sorrows, before their moral character properly commences? Whither shall we run to seek the cause of these varieties, but to the will of the Creator and Disposer of all things?

Can you give me any account, sir, why the great God should appoint such particular human souls to be united to animal bodies, which are born among the rigours and stupidity of Lapland, or in the midst of Africa or America, where reason is buried under gross and heavy prejudices, and whole nations labour under so many wants and disadvantages, with relation to this world and the other? How came your soul or mine to be joined to bodies who drew their first breath in Great Britain, who have ten thousand blessings, in the animal and the rational life, beyond those poor brown or negro savages, that come into the world under brutal parents, who breed them up with cruelty, and sell them for slaves? What is it, dear sir, that makes this distinction between us and them, but the sovereign disposal of God and providence, who, whatsoever reasons he may have in his eternal mind, yet gives no account to us of the reasons of his conduct? Can you or I, sir, pretend to any claim of merit, that we should be born in such families, where we enjoyed the advantages of a liberal education from our infancy, and the knowledge of things human and divine, while the inhabitants of the cottages of the Peake, in Derbyshire, were never taught to know letters, and are so grossly ignorant of the things of God and men? Who made the difference between us and the miners in Cornwall, who spend their days in darkness, and are ever conversant with earth and lead or tin, while we range the sciences with pleasure, and dwell in daylight, and amidst the delights of learning? To whom are our praises due on this account, but to our common Maker and Lord?

If we were only to consider ourselves as men left to find out the way to happiness by our own reasoning powers, are not you and I, sir, placed in much superior advantages to the heathens in Africa, or even to the poor miners in Cornwall? And why may not the same God make as great a difference between his creatures, in bestowing the superior advantages of revelation on some rather than on others, according to his own good pleasure? You yourself must grant, that God has not favoured all men with the same powers, means, or opportunities to obtain future happiness in the way of natural religion, why may he not then distinguish his favourites in point of revelation?

It is enough for us, *Logisto*, if we can but maintain this point, that God does not deal unjustly with any of his creatures: But it is evident, we must allow him to dispense his favours as he pleases; he is not bound to make us all equal in the blessings or the powers of soul or body, with regard to this life, or the life to come, though he has made us all men. And as he has confessedly bestowed on some persons much nobler inward advantages, in the sagacity of their reasoning powers, to find out the way to virtue and happiness, why may he not confer higher outward advantages on some than he has on others? Why may he not give some of his creatures the light of revelation, to guide them to happiness, while he gives others only the light of reason? *May not the great God, the*

Possessor of all things in heaven and earth, do what he pleases with his own benefits? If he has given the blindest and most unhappy nations in the world all that is due to them by nature, in their circumstances, and a natural sufficiency for their happiness, he has done enough to secure his own providence from any just accusations. An African has no right to complain that he was not born a Briton, nor a porter that he was not born a prince, nor *Sophronius* and I, that we were not made prophets or apostles. If God has furnished all men with such natural powers, as, being improved in the best manner, would lead them to virtue, religion, and happiness, surely his creatures may give him leave to make so much distinction between them, as to set some of them in a plainer and easier road to happiness than he has others: And it is shameful ingratitude for us, in christian countries, to complain of our bountiful Creator, who has afforded us such peculiar favours, and made our way to heaven plainest of all.

Logisto. I observe, *Pithander*, you keep close to this distinction of *Sophronius*, and talk of the natural powers of heathens in Africa, and their natural sufficiency to obtain happiness; but I think they ought to have, and therefore I think they have, something more than this natural and remote sufficiency, to find out the way to heaven by their own reason. Is not sense and reason allowed by you all to have a proximate and practical sufficiency to guide men in the affairs of this life? And surely one would think, reason should be a more sure and infallible guide in matters of religion, than sense is, or can be, in the affairs of this world. This shall stand for my third argument; and I would enforce it thus: The difference of good and evil, and the natural obligations to virtue and piety, are as manifest to the mind as any of the objects of sense can be, and they have that certainty and demonstration which the others are not capable of. Surely natural religion has been, and should be always, counted as much within the reach of natural reason, as any business that man has to do, since it is the most necessary and most important of all.

Pithander. Here, sir, your argument again runs directly counter to matter of fact, which has been examined, proved, and agreed between us. The differences of good and evil, and the obligations to virtue, are not so exceeding obvious to heathens as you imagine; for though they may be proved by certain demonstrations, yet these demonstrations are, some of them at least, more deep and difficult; and therefore the rules of virtue and piety are far from being so plain and manifest as the objects of sense, or the common affairs of this present life: Besides, if they were, surely some of these wild savages, at least, would have actually attained the knowledge of them, since they do actually acquaint themselves with objects of sense sufficiently for their own poor and sorry manner of life here on earth; but in the affairs of religion, and a life to come, they are all error and darkness. All their reasoning powers leave them utterly ignorant of true religion, be it never so necessary and important. And such ignorance reigned very much in polite nations too, except among a few philosophers, or men of a studious and thoughtful frame of mind, who could argue upon moral and intellectual subjects, and trace out a few demonstrations and certainties about them, which lie out of the road of Americans, and almost out of the reach of these unthinking creatures.

Logisto. But surely, without being philosophers, every one by employing his natural power of thinking, or his innate reason, in the best manner he was able, might and could not but see the reasonableness and obligation of piety and moral duties, *viz.* that he

ought to worship his Creator, to acknowledge and depend on him, and pray to him for a supply of his wants; that he ought to submit to his providence, and be thankful for the benefits of it; that he ought also to be obedient to governors for the good of society; to be righteous, just, and charitable to man his fellow-creature, be willing to do him all the good he could, and abstain from all injury and violence; that also he ought to use temperately the pleasures and enjoyments of life. There never needed any subtle reasoning to prove these plain duties which nature taught and commanded; and the transgression of any of which is as repugnant to the plain evidence and dictates of natural reason, as it is to the revealed will of God.

Pithander. It has been already granted, that if every one employed his natural reason in the best manner that he was able, there is a natural sufficiency in his reasoning powers to find out these things, or at least the chief of them: But the insufficiency lies very much in this, that their prejudices and aversions, &c. are so great and numerous, that not one in ten thousand will employ his natural reason in the best manner, and this *Sophronius* calls a practical insufficiency. If it were so easy a matter to do it as you represent, how came so many millions of people to be ignorant of these things; or to receive notions about them so grossly and shamefully contrary to truth? How came whole nations, without one exception, to be so blind and stupid, so impious and immoral, and to continue so from age to age.

Logisto. But here starts up a fourth difficulty, and it lies entirely upon you christians to solve it. Remember, my friend, whatsoever argument can be brought from the actual immorality, irreligion, and superstition of men, in any heathen state, to prove the insufficiency of reason in matters of religion, will conclude, with equal strength against the sufficiency of the scriptures, because men are as vicious, as irreligious, and as superstitious under the light and profession of christianity, as the worst of heathens. Gross and abominable as the heathen superstitions were, yet they have been equalled and even exceeded by popish idolatry, which has prevailed for many hundred years over the christian world: As great lewdness has been committed among papists, as ever were known among the heathens, and that with impunity, and esteemed so venial as to be bought off with money. The bloody persecutions and massacres executed by the papists are far more cruel and inhuman, than the human sacrifices which the heathens offered to their gods: So that any crimes of the heathens against the light of reason, will not prove the insufficiency of reason to be their guide, unless you allow the same or greater crimes committed by christians will prove, that the gospel is insufficient.

Pithander. This objection has been already answered: But to speak yet plainer on this head; it is granted, sir, that the vices of professing christians, the venial lewdness of papists, their idolatries, their bloody murders and massacres, are as bad or worse than the crimes of heathens, because they sin against much brighter light, and far greater advantages: But the greatness of the vices of popish or protestant christians cannot infer, that christianity is insufficient to guide, to reform, or save mankind; for it is not the greatness of the crimes, but the entire number or universality of the criminals, that represents reason to be so practically insufficient to save or reform the heathen world. Now you must grant me, that men are not so utterly and universally irreligious, vile and vicious in christian countries, even in popish nations, where the gospel is so corrupted, and much less in protestant lands, where religion is learned and practised with freedom, as they are in the regions of heathenism. There are multitudes of knowing, and virtuous,

and pious persons in christendom, and particularly in the British isles, which shews the practical sufficiency of the gospel to reform mankind; whereas in the more learned and more polite heathen countries, there have been exceeding few truly religious, and in the rude and barbarous regions, which have been the chief scene of our dispute, it will be hard to find one single virtuous and pious man or woman; and therefore, I say, that in a practical sense, reason may rather be called insufficient, though revelation cannot be called so.

Logisto. Let us proceed then to a fifth argument, why reason, methinks, should be practically sufficient to direct all mankind to those duties which God requires of them, and to conduct them to happiness; and that is, because happiness, that is, spiritual moral happiness, is the end for which man was made, and therefore it is certainly to be obtained by those rational moral powers, which are the very principles God gave man for his guide and conduct to this happiness. Otherwise man was made for an end, to the obtaining of which the means are insufficient.

Pithander. I answer this two ways: First, it may be said in a sense, that God made mankind in general, in his first formation of them for happiness; but he made them to obtain this happiness in a way of free choice, by the diligent use of their rational faculties in the best manner: Now if far the greatest part of the heathen world will wretchedly and wilfully abuse these faculties, if they will thoughtlessly and rashly *choose the evil*, and rush into it, if they will neglect to seek, or to enquire, or to learn what is good, as well as to practise it, then though these faculties may be said to be naturally and remotely sufficient for religion and happiness, yet they are never likely to become effectual for these purposes to one in a thousand. When there is a long established habit and universal custom of neglecting or abusing their faculties spread through whole nations from age to age, these faculties may be called practically insufficient, without any charge upon the Creator of man, or his original constitution of things.

I answer in the second place, that God did not create all mankind for happiness, in such a sense, as to design they should be all actually happy. This is sufficiently evident by the event; for the greatest part of mankind are, and will be, sinful and miserable: Our daily experience and observation concur with our reason, to manifest this to us; and our Saviour says, that few find the way to life. Now may not the great and blessed God, the supreme Lord of all, and Governor of the universe, have some very wise and unsearchable ends in not securing certain happiness to all his rational creation; that is, in leaving some of them wilfully to neglect their own happiness, and to choose their own misery? May he not, consistently with his own perfections, suffer them, by their own folly and negligence, by their guilt and madness, to forfeit the light and strength of those faculties which were at first practically sufficient to guide and conduct them to happiness? Or to render them dark and feeble by an utter disuse, or an actual abuse, of them? It is granted, that man in his original state had a proximate and practical sufficiency to obtain happiness by virtue and religion; yet since he is grown some way or other, a very corrupt and degenerate creature, his reasoning powers are now hardly to be called a sufficient guide, or rule, or law, for his conduct to the original happiness for which he was made.

Logisto. But what is there wanting to make a rule or law sufficient to the end of its being a rule or law, but that it be plain and clear, and easy to be understood, and

enforced with sufficient sanction of rewards and punishments? Now reason always was and is such a law to mankind, even since any supposed degeneracy as well as before.

Pithander. Dear sir, have you already forgot the two accounts which *Sophronius* has given us of African and American savages, and their reasoning powers? Have you forgot the whole subject of our first days conference? Can you bring these things back to your thoughts, and yet imagine, that these rules of religion and virtue, these sacred laws and sanctions, which you speak of, are plain, and clear, and easy to be found out and understood by such stupid and perverse animals, with all their wretched reasonings? Have they, within their view, any such ideas of these eternal obligations to duty, either to God or man, or of these awful sanctions of future punishments and rewards? Can these holy rules and sanctions be called plain, and clear, and easy to such creatures, among whom we can hardly suppose there is one in a whole nation, or a whole age, nay scarce one in many nations and many ages, who ever found out, or knew, or believed these rules and these sanctions? I beg you, sir, not to constrain me to repeat these things so often, by urging over again, what has been abundantly answered, even to your own conviction.

Sophronius. Pray, *Pithander*, let me entreat you to guard your temper a little. Perhaps *Logisto* has read over these arguments in some modern pamphlets, since your first day's conference, and they being fresh in his thoughts, may have renewed his difficulties, and he is willing to have every obstacle entirely removed that lies in the way of his complete conviction of the truth, and his establishment in it.

Logisto. *Sophronius* is much in the right. He has spoken the matter of fact, and the very sense of my heart. I proceed therefore to propose another difficulty, and I hope *Pithander*, you will not call this a repetition of what has been answered before, since I borrow it from your own favourite writer St. Paul, whom I have never yet cited against you. Do you remember what he writes in the first chapter of his letter to the Romans, *that the eternal power and godhead are known by the visible things of creation;* though he adds indeed, *that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful*, but that *they held the truth in unrighteousness;* that is, they did not hearken to the truths which their reason taught them, but unrighteously imprisoned or stifled those truths, and *therefore they were without excuse;* And did you never consider what he says in his second chapter of that letter, verses 14, 15. *The gentiles who have not the law*, that is, any written law, *do by nature the things contained in the law; these are a law to themselves; which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts excusing or accusing them?* What can be more evident and express than that this writer believes and declares, that the rules of duty which the gentiles owed to God and man, were implanted in their minds, and that when they transgressed either of them, they sinned against their knowledge, their own consciences accused them, and they were inexcusable? And yet that sometimes they obeyed some of these rules, and then their consciences excused them, or approved their actions.

Pithander. If such a writer as St. Paul had told me, that human reason, in all the heathen world, was practically sufficient to guide them into true religion and happiness, and there were no facts to contradict it, I pay such a veneration to his writings, that I would readily drop the dispute, and give up the cause entirely: But I do not find St. Paul says any such thing, either here, or any where else, nor can his words be construed

to amount to such a proposition. And to make this plain, sir, be pleased to observe these three things:

First, that the persons he speaks of, in the first chapter, are chiefly the learned heathens, or at least the inhabitants of the countries where learning flourished, such as Egypt, Greece, Asia, Rome, &c. such as had found out and known the being and chief attributes of God by his works; such as knew *the true God*, and *professed themselves to be wise;* see verses 19, 20, 21, 22. But the apostle does not say, that their knowledge reached so far as to lead them to salvation, though by not worshipping and honouring God, so far as they knew him, they rendered themselves inexcusable. Verses 20, 21. *They did not glorify him as God when they knew him; they were not thankful* for his mercies; they became idolaters, *and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the image of corruptible man, and into birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things, and worshipped the creature more than the Creator.* Verses 23, 25. *They did not like to retain God in their knowledge, and therefore they are without excuse.* Verses 20, 21, 28. *Their foolish heart was darkened*, and they were justly abandoned of God, *and given up to all manner of iniquity.* They wilfully shut their eyes against the light, and therefore God, in his righteous judgment, sealed up their eyes, and gave them up to a mind void of discernment, as many of our critics render the ἀδόκιμος, and thus their own reason, by their abuse of it, was rendered more insufficient than it was before; their minds had gained a strong bias toward error, as a natural consequence of their sin and folly, and then as a righteous judgment from heaven, they were abandoned to follow those errors without any restraints of providence or grace.

In the second place let it be considered, that when the apostle says, *Rom.* ii. 14, 15. that *the work of the law is written in their hearts*, he can never mean, that the knowledge of the laws of God and their duty, practically sufficient for their future happiness, is actually found in the hearts of all the heathen world: For this is so contrary to plain fact in the barbarous nations, that the apostle could never intend to assert it. All that it can be supposed to mean therefore is this, that there is a natural and remote sufficiency in their hearts, or their reasoning powers, to find out their duty, which I have already granted; and that there are several of the more obvious and common instances wherein their consciences do actually know their duty, and excuse them when they practise it, or accuse them when they neglect it. And this, in some measure, is true concerning the rudest and most ignorant nations of the earth, that there are particular instances of duty, and some particular rules of honesty, justice, and compassion, which their consciences sometimes may actually represent to them; and according to their compliance or non-compliance may approve or condemn them. But this is far from asserting, that every man and woman in the heathen world has the whole law of God actually *written in their hearts*, or an actual knowledge of all the truths and duties necessary to religion and happiness. The most rude and barbarous creatures in America, may sometimes be awakened by nature and conscience to do a few of the social duties of life, which are contained in the law, without supposing them to have found out all the necessaries of true religion: And they may also resist the dictates of their reason and conscience, so far as to condemn them justly, without the least probability of one in a thousand following the leadings of reason and conscience, in the enquiry and practice of the true religion, so far as to save them. And therefore it may be observed, that the apostle does not say, that any shall be saved without the written law; but that *those who have sinned without it, shall perish without it:* And though in

some particular instances *their consciences may excuse* them as well as *accuse them* in others, yet in the whole of their practice he does not affirm their consciences will actually excuse any of them.

In the last place, I desire it to be considered, that the apostle could never suppose the brutish and barbarous part of the heathen world to have any proximate or practical sufficiency for religion and salvation, or such capacities and advantages as were ever likely to attain that end, when the characters which he gives, even of the more polite nations through which he travelled, are so exceeding dismal and desperate, so widely distant from the knowledge, fear, and love of the true God, and so universally abandoned to gross errors, idolatry, and shameful vices, that they were *without God*, or atheists, *and without hope in the world;* Eph. ii. 12. In the first chapter to the Romans, which has been already cited, the wise men amongst them, *who knew God, did not like to retain God in their knowledge, their foolish heart was darkened, they were given over to a reprobate mind, they were filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, &c. Backbiters, haters of God, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful;* 2 Cor. iv. 4. *Their minds are blinded by the god of this world,* that is, the devil and his angels, whom many of them worshipped as their gods. And in Eph. iv. 18. *Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart;* with many other expressions to the same purpose in his epistles. Let it be observed here, that the people where this apostle preached, and to whom his letters are written, lie in Greece, or round about it, and were within the verge of that learning and politeness which from Greece diffused itself round the neighbour nations and countries. Now if these things are spoken concerning the more knowing nations, what most dismal characters of deeper darkness, despair and death, would the apostle have given to the stupid Laplanders, to the brutal creatures of New-Holland, in human shape, to the savages of the wild regions of Africa and America, had the course of his travels led him through their countries? Surely you can never suppose, that he would have pronounced their reason, under these ten-fold clouds of stupidity, prejudice, and error, ever likely to break through these obstacles, and to lead one in a thousand of them into the ways of truth, holiness, and eternal life? And this is what we call a practical insufficiency.

Logisto. Really, sir, I think you have made it out beyond my expectations, that your good friend Paul, your apostle and oracle, was much of your opinion in this matter. I shall not cite him again in haste for a witness on my side. But I will ask leave to cite a great writer, whom you may call my oracle, if you please, so far as I pay deference to the authority of any man; and that is Cicero, whom I take to be a man of honour and virtue, and as bright a genius at least as St. Paul was, and much more improved in the learning of the philosophers; I cannot but fancy him to be one of the greatest men of all antiquity. For this reason I have two very good editions of his works by me, one of which I always keep in this summer-house, and another in my library. Let us therefore turn to some places of his writings, to which a late author has directed me, and see what he says of the universal power and sufficiency of reason to lead all mankind to their duty, to preserve them from sin, and to be, as it were, a divine law within them. See his third book De Republica, and that noble fragment there preserved by Lactantius: " Est quidem vera lex recta ratio naturæ congruens, diffusa in omnes, constans, sempiterna,

quæ vocet ad officium jubendo; vetando, a fraude deterreat. Nec vero aut per senatum aut per populum solvi hac lege possumus: Neque est quærendus explanator aut interpres ejus alius: Nec erit alia lex Romæ, alia Athenis, alia nunc, alia posthac: Sed et omnes gentes, et omni tempore una lex et sempiterna et immortalis continebit: Unusque erit communis quasi magister et imperator omnium Deus ille legis hujus inventor, lator," &c. In his second book De Legibus, he says, " Legem neque hominum ingeniis excogitatam, neque scitum aliquod esse populorum, sed æternum quiddam quod universum mundum regat." You see what a high esteem he has every where for this law of nature, written in the hearts of all men: He repeats it often: you find it again, Lib. iii. De Officiis, " Ipsa naturæ ratio, quæ est lex divina et humana, cui parere qui velit nunquam committet ut alienum appetat, et id quod alteri detraxerit sibi assumat." And in the third book of his Tusculan Questions, he says, "—Qui vero probari possit ut sibi mederi animus non possit? &c. qui se sanari voluerint, præceptisque sapientum paruerint, sine ulla dubitatione sanentur," &c.

The sense of all these expressions may be summed up in this manner: " Right reason, which is conformable to nature, is, that true law which is diffused or spread abroad among all men; it is constant, it is everlasting, it calls us to our duty by its commands, it forbids us to practise iniquity, and deters us from it. Nor can we be freed from our obligations to this law by senate or people. Nor need we seek any other explainer or interpreter of it, it is so clear in itself. It is not one law at Athens and another at Rome, one now and another hereafter; but it is the same immortal and everlasting law that obliges all nations, and at all times. And there is one, as it were, the common Master and Ruler of all men, even that God who is the inventor and the maker of this law, &c. This natural reason is both a human and a divine law, which is not invented by the wit or fancy of men, is not the statute and decree of any particular nations; but something eternal, that does or should govern the whole world. He that obeys it will never be guilty of coveting his neighbour's goods, nor of assuming to himself that which he takes away from another, whether it be in point of honour, of property, or estate. And if the mind of man has at any time failed in its duty, and suffered itself to be corrupted with vice, there is no doubt but it is able to heal and reform itself, since it is the mind that has found out the very medicines for healing the body; and those souls who are willing to be healed and reformed, and will obey the precepts of the wise men and philosophers, shall, without doubt, be reformed and healed; for philosophy, that is, the doctrine of reason, is the medicine of the mind." And no doubt this was the sense of most of the great men amongst the ancients, as well as of Cicero, as would evidently appear, if we had time to search out and make citations from their writings.

Pithander. Give me leave, sir, to make these two answers to what you have drawn from this great man of antiquity. First, all that he says of the sufficiency of reason, will reach no farther than the concessions which have been already made, *viz.* That the power of reason in every man hath a natural and remote sufficiency to lead them to the most general notions and practices of duty both to God and man: " There are indeed," saith he, " in our minds some seeds of virtue, which, if we would let them grow up, would lead us by nature to blessedness;" *Tusculan Questions*, Book iii. And it is granted also, that this power has been drawn out into a more regular exercise by some happy geniuses in some nations than it has in others: Where persons of a thoughtful and philosophic spirit have risen up in the heathen world, they have employed their own reason to much

better purposes than the rest of mankind; they have drawn out several of the laws of nature into view; they have communicated these to their countrymen; and the manners of the nation have been hereby more polished, and several more virtues practised.

Yet let it be observed, that Cicero, in some parts of his writings, particularly in these Tusculan Questions, Book iii. does not make the light of nature practically self-sufficient for the bulk of mankind, even in learned nations. He grants indeed, that "If nature had so framed us that we could behold herself, and take a complete view of her, and that we were able to form our lives by her guidance, there would be no need of our learning philosophy: But now she has given us only very little sparks, which we soon extinguish by our evil customs and depraved opinions, that the true light of nature does no where appear." And again—"As soon as we see the light, we are immediately in the midst of all perverse sentiments and wickedness; so that we seem to have sucked in error almost with the milk of our nurse." This he says even of the Romans. But as for the barbarous and unthinking herds of mankind in other countries, alas! how little do some of them actually know even of this universal and eternal law? They do not awaken their thoughts at all to enquire and search it out: It lies culpably and everlastingly dormant in the seeds of it in their hearts, and produces neither knowledge, virtue, nor piety. There is need of some better interpreter or explainer of this eternal law in these brutal and stupid creatures, than the mere working of their own reason; and there is need of some further powerful hints to be given their reason, in order to awaken and excite them to take any cognizance of it for the purposes of true virtue or religion.

And even these very polite nations of Rome and Athens, and the schools of the philosophers themselves, have been greatly assisted from some traditions of divine revelation, and perhaps had their first and their best hints of religion derived from thence. Some of them have confessed they wanted such help. Some have acknowledged they borrowed it from those who lived nearer to the gods; and others stole their notions without confessing it. This has been traced out with great learning by some writers, such as Stillingfleet, Gale, Edwards, &c. And after all, the rules of religion and virtue, which were drawn up by these philosophers, have been very imperfect and defective in many instances, as *Sophronius* has shewn before: And at Athens and Rome they had very different opinions about the most important subjects, of God, virtue, the chief good, &c. and they had grievous quarrels and contests about many parts of their moral philosophy. Nor hath Cicero nor *Logisto* yet proved, that the gross and ignorant nations, the barbarous and savage people of Africa and America, have any proximate and practical sufficiency to guide themselves into virtue, religion, and happiness, or that ever they would or could arrive at it, if left entirely to themselves.

Let it be observed here, that several of these nations have not so much as a priest, and there is scarce any such thing as a philosopher amongst them, or any one who pretends to teach either virtue or religion in the extent of a thousand miles: Whereas your own Cicero himself acknowledges, "that it is by hearkening to the precepts of philosophers, that the bulk of mankind must be reformed and healed." For he was not so weak and inaccurate in his observation of men, nor so complaisant to his whole species, as to imagine, that every low genius of human nature, and all the meaner ranks of mankind, who are ever busily engaged among the necessities, the labours, or the amusements of this life, should frame a scheme of religion and virtue for themselves, and spin out of their own reasoning powers a whole system of rules for their own conduct toward God and

man, in things that relate to this life and another. Now, by Cicero's own account of matters, what shall those nations do to heal or reform themselves, who have not one of those wise men or philosophers among them?

Secondly, consider what sort of man Cicero himself was, and whether you can think him, with all his boasted reason, fitted and prepared for the favour of God in a heavenly state. I will allow him to have as much virtue as most of the philosophers; but he was guilty of one huge and glaring vice, and that is, a most exorbitant ambition and excess of pride, which is hateful to man, provoking to God, and the very image of the devil: And yet this he indulged in a most shameless manner: His writings and his behaviour are full of self, and discover one of the proudest and vainest mortals that ever trod upon the earth. At present I will point to no other proof of it than his own letter to Lucceius, who was about to write the history of his own time: There you see him sacrificing even truth and honesty to the grand idol of his pride. "I beg you," says he to Lucceius, "and I urge you over and over again, that you would lay out your wit to dress up the year of my consulship; lavish out your ornaments upon it: Neglect the laws of history; do not consider so much to say what truth requires, as what will render that period and scene of my life shining and glorious." Is this your virtuous man, *Logisto?* Is this the man of honour, that would persuade his friend to convey falsehood and lies down to posterity, merely to flatter his own ambition, and to procure him fame in following ages?

Logisto. Indeed, *Pithander*, this is such a scandalous and shameless manner of exposing his own vanity, and building his honour on the ruins of truth, that I could scarce imagine that great and wise man would have suffered such a letter to go out from his hand. I fear, my friend, you have cited this in gross merely by your memory, and exaggerated some expressions to disgrace his character, and blaze abroad his frailty.

Pithander. I own, sir, it is many years since I read his epistle, and I have cited only the general sense of it, according to the impression it made on my mind when I read it: But since you have his works here, let us turn to this famous letter. I think it is in the fifth book, among his letters to Metellus and others. See how he begins: "When I have been in your company, Lucceius, I have felt a sort of rustic bashfulness to say those things which, in your absence, I will now declare with freedom; for a letter never blushes. I burn with an incredible desire of having my name adorned and celebrated by your writings: —Think whether it be not better to divide the history of the civil conspiracy, "that is, the conspiracy of Catiline, which was suppressed in Cicero's consulship," and relate it apart from the foreign wars! For when your whole soul is engaged in one argument, and fixed on one person, I plainly see how much more copious and ornamental all your writing will be. I am not ignorant what an impudent thing I am doing, when I urge you to adorn my actions: But he that hath once passed the limits of modesty, must become thoroughly and completely impudent." Then a little after follow the words I chiefly refer to, which are these: "Itaque te plane etiam atque etiam rogo, ut et ornes ea vehementius etiam quam fortasse sentis, et in eo leges historiæ negligas,——amorique nostro plusculum etiam quam concedit veritas largiare. I ask you plainly again and again, that you would beautify this transaction of mine with more ornament than perhaps you think it deserves, and therein neglect the laws of history, and bestow a little more of this your favour on me than truth will allow." You see, gentlemen, Cicero's own pen makes him as vain and shameless as my representation of him: And he spends above a page in folio on the same

subject, and frequently urges his friend to write this immediately: "Ut et cæteri viventibus nobis ex libris tuis nos cognoscant, et nosmetipsi vivi gloriola nostra perfruamur: That the world may know me by your writings, and I may enjoy in my lifetime the glory that belongs to me." What glaring pride and impudent falsehood sully the character of this heathen saint of yours, *Logisto?*

Again, let us see what his religion and piety were: He cannot find whether there was one God or many: He talks often of the gods in the language of the stoics; as for the true Parent or Maker of the universe, as *Sophronius* has cited him, Cicero acknowledges, "it was hard to search him out, and when you have found him, he forbids you to teach the knowledge of him to the bulk of mankind." Is this the man that deserves the favour of the true God, who hardly knew him himself, and was resolved to conceal him from the world? As for his own religion, he complied entirely with the polytheism and idolatry of the nation, and worshipped the multitude of their gods, that is, the stars, the devils, the departed heroes, or the chimeras which the city of Rome had adopted into the number of their deities. In many parts of his writings he vindicates the national ceremonies and idolatrous rites of worship, superstition, and auguration, as necessary to be observed; and I think it is in his second book of Laws that he presses upon his countrymen a strict observance of all the religious rites established by authority, and declares all those worthy of the last punishment, who should attempt to disturb them, as some of the vindicators of human reason frankly allow concerning him. Pray, sir, what great influence had reason upon the heart and practice of such a man as this, who, when he could not believe the Roman idols to be the true God who made or governs the world, yet uses his utmost influence to make the world worship them, that is, to make mankind idolaters, to set up rivals to the true God, and procure divine honours for them, without any public acknowledgment paid to the true God himself, the Creator and Lord of the universe, and with an express prohibition of making him known?

Logisto. If I would shew myself a fair disputant, and a searcher after truth, I know not well what defence to make for my darling author Cicero, unless you will permit me to say, that neither he, nor the rest of the ancient sages, could imagine there was so much hurt in practising the religion of their native country, and in worshipping the gods of it, as the Bible has taught both Jews and christians to conceive: And that this vice of pride and ambition, of which *Pithander* brings such a heavy charge against Cicero, was so universal amongst all great men, that they counted it a piece of virtue and glory, rather than a crime.

Pithander. But does not human reason, even your darling reason, teach you the same that the Bible teaches the Jews and christians? Is not polytheism and idolatry contrary to the nature of things, and to all the principles and rules of reason? Is not pride and self-sufficiency, and such an ambitious desire of fame, at the expence of honesty and truth, a very criminal thing in itself, and a high offence both against God and man? Was Cicero's own reason practically sufficient to be his guide in matters of religion and virtue, if it indulged him in such corrupt and abominable practices as these? Or if it did make any feeble remonstrances against them, his practice still shews how weak, and vain, and insignificant these remonstrances were; and this proves to us, on the other hand, the practical insufficiency of his reason to resist criminal inclinations, and enable him to oppose the idolatrous customs of his country. Thus it appears, that either his reason

was insufficient to guide him right, or if it did whisper truth and duty to him, it was with so low a voice as was very insufficient to make him obey.

Logisto. Pray, *Sophronius*, let us have your sentiment upon this subject; for I am at a loss to find a solid reply, and I must be silent, unless I would run into cavilling?

Sophronius. Dear sir, pardon me if I say, that I am as unable to refute *Pithander*'s manner of arguing as you are; and I rejoice to see you so steady a friend to truth, as to yield to an argument. But I will take occasion, gentlemen, if you favour me with your permission, to make one remark upon this debate of yours, concerning Cicero's opinion and practice with regard to every man's compliance with the religion of his country.—Several of the great men of antiquity, of whom Cicero was one, having lost the divine revelations of Noah, their ancestor, thought it necessary to introduce some doctrines and duties of pretended revelation, and particular ceremonies of worship, among their countrymen, in order to oblige the consciences and practices of men to virtue, and to restrain them from vice, by some guidance and authority superior to each man's own reason, because they were generally convinced that reason, as it is at present in the bulk of mankind, is very insufficient to be their guide to virtue, religion, and happiness.

Give me leave, upon this occasion, to read to you a page out of an ingenious writer of the present age, wherein he cites your own favourite author Cicero more than once. It is in the 49th page of his book,* where he is arguing against the same ill treatise which Doctor Waterland opposes, written by some supposed infidel, and entitled "Christianity as Old as the Creation." "The testimony of all ages," says he, "teaches us that reason, whatever force and strength it might have in particular men, yet never had credit or authority enough in the world to be received as a public and authentic rule, either of religious or civil life. This is allowed by all the great reasoners of the heathen world: And the experience of its insufficiency as a guide of life, is given by many of them as the very cause of the invention and establishment of religion," that is, of some pretended revelation from heaven, and ceremonies of worship, that the authority of religion, as Tully takes notice, might restrain those whom reason had been found too weak to keep in order. The life of man, as Plutarch tells us from Euripides, was once, like that of beasts, governed by force and violence; laws were then contrived to repel injustice; but when these proved still insufficient, religion was at last invented: By whose mysteries, as Tully observes, men from a savage life became formed and cultivated, as it were, to humanity.

"Such a universal consent must needs be owing to a universal conviction and experience of the insufficiency of reason, and seems to be the voice of nature disclaiming it as a guide in the case of religion: And thus our author's scheme, by the confession of all antiquity, and even by his own, must appear foolish and irrational, in attempting to set up that for a perfect rule of life, which, from the nature of things, never was or could be received as such in any age or country whatsoever. Should he then gain his end, and actually demolish christianity, what would be the consequence, what the fruit of his labours, but confusion and disorder, till some other traditional religion could be settled in its place; till we had agreed to recal either the gods of the old world, Jupiter, Minerva, Venus, &c. or with the idolaters of the new, to worship sun, moon, and stars; or, instead

* Remarks on Dr. Waterland, &c.

of Jesus, take Mahomet or Confucius for the author of our faith? And hence may be demonstrated the immorality also of his scheme, even upon his own principles." Now, though I cannot think this writer has argued so effectually against Doctor Waterland, in his remarks upon him, as to leave no just room for a defence of the scripture history of the fall and circumcision, &c. yet his sketch or plan of an answer to the author of "Christianity as Old as the Creation," has some valuable thoughts in it, and worthy of the reader's best notice.

Logisto. Well, gentlemen, I will pursue this manner of debate no longer: I see my cause cannot be supported by it. I will immediately therefore betake myself to my last and strongest argument, to prove, that the natural and rational powers of man must have a greater sufficiency than this which you allow, to lead all mankind to religion and happiness; for I think the contrary doctrine bears very hard upon the wisdom, the justice, and the goodness of the great and blessed God. I am at a loss to find how it is consistent with his justice and his benevolence to his creatures, to leave such millions of mankind, from age to age, under so poor a capacity to find out or to practise the way of pleasing their Maker in this world, and yet to judge and condemn them in the other world for displeasing him.

Pithander. I grant, *Logisto*, this is a point of argument which has great difficulties attending it, and therefore I propose that we adjourn the debate for one half hour, and if you please to give us your company, and lead us through the several walks and divisions of your beautiful garden, we will there relax our thoughts for a season, and I hope we shall each of us resume the debate again with fresh spirits, and to our mutual satisfaction.

Logisto. With all my heart, gentlemen, I attend you with the greatest readiness and delight.

THE FOURTH CONFERENCE.

While *Logisto* was attending his two friends through the pleasures of his garden, he conveyed them to a very agreeable piece of elevated ground, whence they could survey the neighbouring fields and meadows covered with cattle of divers kinds.—Some were grazing upon the natural bounties of providence, some rested at their ease, and others were sporting variously, with life and vigour, and joy, in the provisions that were made for the happiness suited to their natures. The birds sung their cheerful airs upon the bushes, being replenished with their proper food, or they exulted upon the wing with wanton pleasure, transporting themselves from bough to bough; and their little souls took in all the satisfaction of their natures, and their harmless life. Even the very creeping insects, as well as those that were made for flight, appeared joyful in their narrow dimensions: The worm, the emmet, and the butterfly were pleased with their atoms or inches of being, and in their low rank of existence seemed to bear their witness to the beneficent hand that gave them every thing necessary to their support and delight. *Logisto* took notice of it, while they were taking their rounds, and at their return to the summer-house he thus renewed the conference.

Logisto. And can you think, *Pithander*, that every worthless creature in the universe, not only the beasts and the birds, but even the butterflies and the worms, have powers given them by their wise and bountiful Creator sufficient for their happiness, during thei

little extent of existence; and shall not man, the lord of the lower world, man, the favourite of his Maker, shall not man have sufficient powers conferred upon him, to lead and conduct him to his final happiness? Is it not inconsistent with the justice and equity of a God, and much more inconsistent with the goodness of so magnificent and so bountiful a Being, to make creatures of an immortal duration capable of intense happiness and intense misery, through all that immortal existence, and not provide them with sufficient capacities in themselves to make that long state of existence happy? And yet what multitudes of them, according to your account, are brought into being, almost under a necessity of being miserable? Did these intellectual and wretched creatures ever once desire to exist? Was not their existence the mere effect of their Maker's sovereign pleasure? And would the sovereign pleasure of a wise, a righteous, and merciful God, ever bring creatures into such an immortal existence, without sufficient powers to guide and conduct them to that felicity which is suited to their natures?

Nor is the mere remote, natural, and speculative sufficiency, which *Sophronius* has taught you, any sufficient answer to this difficulty. Could so wise, so righteous, and merciful a God bring millions of creatures into being with such a poor provision for their happiness, as not one in ten thousand should be likely to obtain it? This is so near akin to an absolute insufficiency, that this doctrine of yours seems to bear too hard upon the perfections of God? What! has the blessed God dealt harder with his creature man than with any of the meaner works of his hands?

Pithander. No, sir, by no means: And if you could have known man in his original state of powers and blessings, furnished with a clear and sagacious mind, with reason bright and strong, and superior to all his lower appetites and passions, you would doubtless have acknowledged the transcendent advantages for elevated happiness, and the rich sufficiencies given to the creature man. You would have confessed, they were such as became a magnificent, a wise, and a bountiful Creator to bestow upon his noblest piece of workmanship on this earthly globe. God hath not dealt worse with his creature man than with the rest; but man has dealt worse with his Maker than any of them. He has not followed the laws of his nature, but broke his allegiance to his God, by choosing evil instead of good: He has ruined his original happy state, and, according to the constitution of things, his whole nature and race is tainted, so that he is become viler than the brutes that perish: He has forfeited his native blessings, and he, with his race, are become rebels, and obnoxious to their Maker's displeasure. This, as *Sophronius* hinted in the first of our conferences, has been the sense of the more thinking heathens, as well as Jews and christians; and without an eye to some such sort of original degeneracy, it is hard, if not impossible, to give a satisfactory account for the poor, dark, stupid, and wretched circumstances in which so great a part of mankind are brought into this world, wherein they live and grow up, age after age, in gross ignorance and vice, thoughtless of their duty to the God that created them, or their true happiness in the enjoyment of his favour.

Logisto. But since I am not yet so far convinced, nor so complaisant as to confess this original degeneracy, and since it would lead us perhaps too far from our present point of debate, pray, my friend, try if you cannot say something else to clear the justice and the goodness of God from the imputation of dealing so hardly with his creature man.

Pithander. I cannot wave this matter of some original degeneracy; for I think it is so necessary to the solution of the difficulties which attend this point, that it is not to

be done without it: Yet it is not the only answer to them neither; I will see what may be said from other topics also; but I cannot promise you to avoid this.

Logisto. Well then, let us suppose mankind to come into the world in any circumstances of degeneracy, yet still it is agreed, that each of them has an immortal soul, each of them is accountable to God for his own actions, each of them is rewardable for his services to God, and punishable for his neglects of duty, and for the indulgences of vice; therefore, surely all mankind hath a right, by the common laws of equity, to be furnished with the knowledge of those things for which they are accountable, the difference of vice and virtue, and the duties they owe to God and to man: They have a right to be endued with a sufficient power to find out and to practise them: And if this sufficiency of light and power be not planted in the reason and nature of men, they have a right to have it by divine revelation: Otherwise they would be excusable in their foulest vices, in their neglect of duties, and their practice of all ungodliness, because they seem to be left under almost an unavoidable necessity of neglecting their duty, and of sinning against their Maker.

Pithander. In such a degenerate and sinful world of creatures as we are, who have so shamefully rebelled against him that made us, perhaps it is sufficient to vindicate the equity of God, if he has left in mankind such a natural and remote power of sufficiency to find out and practise their duty, as *Sophronius* has allowed in his distinction; as for the ruder and wilder nations, this is certainly and evidently the case: By their brutal thoughtlessness, their obstinate prejudices from age to age, their vicious propensities, and their long-contracted habits of wilful ignorance and impiety, these natural powers of reason are so disused and unpractised in matters of piety and virtue, that they will scarce ever be rightly exercised, or lead them into the path of religion and happiness. They have forfeited the proximate and practical sufficiency of their reason, and without the superior light of revelation, they can hardly be ever supposed to recover it.

Logisto. Dear sir, I intreat you to consider, that however the great and righteous God might punish the first man by such a forfeiture, however such mere relics of a natural and remote sufficiency be all that was afforded to the supposed first parent of our race himself, who sinned against God, yet can his children and posterity, for a hundred generations, be involved in this forfeiture? Though the equity of God may justify itself in confining Adam himself to such a limited and contracted capacity of attaining happiness after his sin, yet can the equity or goodness of God be justified in leaving his offspring in such hopeless and calamitous circumstances, with such a narrow pittance of reason and powers to find out their duty, to secure their own welfare, and obtain the felicity of their beings? What was the crime of these poor, ignorant, wretched infants, that could forfeit any part of the powers due to their natures? What have these millions of African and American souls done, that they should be born under so dark and dismal a climate, in the midst of such impious customs, such universal oblivion or neglect of God, such insuperable prejudices, and with such strong vicious propensities, that it is ten thousand to one, as you confess, if ever any of them come to the knowledge and favour of God, to the practice of true religion, and to the enjoyment of future felicity? Has the equity, or wisdom, or will of God acted fairly with all these miserable millions? Has divine and infinite goodness ever expressed itself toward them as becomes a Creator, a Father of his creatures, and a God of unbounded love? Or can his justice ever pronounce a sentence of

condemnation, as a Judge, upon them, for sinning against such laws as they never knew, nor had a practical and proximate capacity to find out?

Pithander. Pray, good *Logisto*, calm your spirit, and rebate your fire: Be not so vehement and pathetic in your oratory for the sinful race of sinful man: Take heed, that while you act the zealous advocate for rebel creatures, you do not repeat the crime and the danger of which I took the freedom to warn you before: Have a care of running furiously upon an accusation of the all-wise and righteous Creator. If you give me leave, sir, I will endeavour to soften and relieve the terror of this objection, by laying before you several weighty considerations. But before I begin them, I must remind you, that while you argue from the justice and goodness of God, that there ought to be such a proximate and practical sufficiency in all mankind, to obtain the favour of God in a way of religion, you argue against plain matter of fact again, and which you yourself have allowed, and that more than once, in this afternoon's conference.

Forgive me therefore, dear sir, if I am constrained to repeat again to you, that plain fact is an unchangeable and obstinate thing, and will not bend to any of our arguments, though derived from the divinest topic. All our notions of the immense goodness and eternal equity and justice of God, and our strongest inferences from them, can never prove any thing contrary to plain fact, nor demonstrate that not to be the case which really and actually is the case. And I am sure the argument is much stronger and more convincing when turned into this form, *viz.* This is the sad case of the African and American savages, and yet God is just and good; therefore it is certainly consistent with divine equity and goodness: This argument, I say, is much stronger than for you to tell me it is not agreeable to your notions of divine equity and goodness, that this should be their case, and therefore, in opposition to plain fact, you infer this is not their case.

Are you so sure that your scanty notions and your fallible reasonings on the equity and goodness of a God are exactly true, as you are sure that these savage nations are unfit for heaven, and are far from any probable way of attaining it: Are those sublime and incomprehensible perfections of the Deity so easy to be judged of in their natures? And are you so certain of the inferences you draw from them, that these inferences of yours must regulate the divine conduct? Are all these things so plainly evident to you, and all within your compass, and grasp, and determination, as much as this plain matter of fact, that these African and American herds of mankind, with all their reasoning powers, are not practically sufficient to guide themselves to future happiness? Can you be so certain that God's justice and goodness must oblige him to give all men on earth such rational powers as shall be practically sufficient for their guidance and conduct in religion, as you are certain that there are on earth thousands and ten thousands of human creatures, who, to all appearance, are never likely to know, and worship, and love their Maker, and be fitted for his enjoyment by the mere powers of their own wild and untaught reason?

Be content therefore, good *Logisto*, not to argue any longer, even from these divine topics, against certain matter of fact, nor assume so much to your reason, as to teach God what he ought to have done: But I entreat you, sir, to turn your argument into a juster channel. Let these your ideas of divine justice and goodness, and the conduct of God, which you think must result from them, be only proposed as difficulties on this subject, which want an answer, and which to you appear knotty questions: But let what is matter of fact rest and abide so; for no reasonings can alter it; and let the blessed God be allowed to be just and good still.

Logisto. I confess, *Pithander*, this is a more modest way of talking, and becomes such poor and narrow understandings as ours are, when we dispute about the perfections of the great and blessed God, and his government and conduct toward his creatures: I consent therefore, and would now only propose all that I have before pronounced, perhaps with too bold an air, merely as difficulties and darknesses in divine conduct, which want some further light and skill to solve them.

Pithander. Well, sir, since you are brought thus far to acknowledge, that God is just and good, and yet that multitudes of human race have not a practical sufficiency to lead them to happiness, be pleased to consider now, who are the persons upon whom it lies to solve these difficulties, to reconcile these two jarring propositions, and to shed light upon these darknesses of providence. Does it lie upon christians only, and the believers of the gospel? Doth it not fall upon the deists also? Is it not as much your business therefore, as it is mine, to relieve these hardships? Do you not believe as well as we, that God is wise, and good and righteous? And are you not convinced, that whole nations live under such unhappy circumstances, that their own reason is not practically sufficient to guide and conduct them into true religion and happiness? Do you not own, as well as I, that this is the present constitution of things? And doth not your accusation of this conduct of Providence fall as heavy upon the God of the deists, as upon the God of the christians? Pray, bethink yourself a little, sir, why must christianity have the blame of all these hardships thrown upon it, as though it was that which brought so many stumbling-blocks and darknesses into the scheme of God's government? Are not you, who believe and reverence, and adore the wisdom, and justice, and goodness of God, as much bound to vindicate these perfections of the divine nature from any appearing difficulties and accusations of the conduct of Providence, as we are, since you are convinced that these difficulties are found in providence? Pray, sir, deal fairly with christianity, and let it not always bear such unjust criminations and reproaches. Let the religion of the deists try to solve and clear up all these difficulties, which now appear to lie upon their scheme as well as ours.

Logisto. You surprise me, *Pithander*, with this short turn upon me. I had not the least suspicion that you would lay the labouring ore upon me, to shove away the burthen that I always thought belonged only to your scheme, and pressed so hard upon it. But what shall I say to this? let me think a little. A philosopher urged to vindicate the conduct of the Divine Being toward the Americans and Hottentots! Surely the conduct of God should be vindicated by all those who acknowledge his being, so far as they are able to do it. The case appears plain, and upon consideration, I own what you say seems just and right: The difficulty lies upon us infidels, as much as it doth upon you believers: And I confess I cannot remove nor relieve it: If you can do it therefore, you will give me a further turn of thought in favour of the christian scheme.

Pithander. I will not pretend, sir, to give a full solution of all the dark appearances and difficulties which attend the providence of God, in many parts of his conduct, relating to this world or another. But I will endeavour to set before you several considerations or suppositions, which will go a great way, at least, toward relieving the hardships which attend this part of God's conduct toward the heathens, in that so great a number of them are born, and grow up, and live and die under such unhappy circumstances, as that their reasoning powers are not in a practical sense sufficient to guide and carry them to religion and happiness. Now, sir, if I can but propose an hypothesis or a rational and probable

scheme of suppositions, drawn chiefly from the christian doctrine and the Bible, whereby these difficulties and hardships may be softened and relieved, I think you ought to esteem it a sufficient answer to the objection, as you are a philosopher: But as I profess myself a christian, so I profess to believe most of these suppositions to be real truths, and therefore I call them a scheme of actual considerations, which relieve this difficulty, and not merely an hypothesis.

Logisto. I long to hear these suppositions or considerations, call them what you please, set forth at large, and in their full strength and weight; for I must acknowledge, since these our conferences, I find myself something disposed to hearken to them.

Pithander. First then, let it be supposed, and I persuade myself you will readily assent to it, that when God made mankind at first, he gave them the knowledge of himself and of his will, so far as concerned their duty to him and to their fellow-creatures; he furnished them with such principles and powers of reasoning and free choice, as were abundantly sufficient for them to find out and practise what he required of them, in order to their continuance in his favour: And it is probable also, that he gave them encouragement to expect the rewards of piety and virtue, in some future and happier state. But let it be supposed also, that he put them upon a state of trial by their own free choice, that they might enquire out and practise all their particular and daily duties, that they might choose what was good, and refuse what was evil; whence it comes to pass, that though they were created in a state of innocence and virtue, and had powers given them richly sufficient to maintain it, yet they were capable of abusing these powers, of neglecting their duty, and of sinning against their Maker.

Secondly, it is but reasonable also to suppose, that he gave them sufficient notice, or taught their reason to inform them, that if they rebelled against him, by neglecting their duty, or practising what was sinful, they should be exposed to his severe displeasure, that they should be liable to what pains and sorrows the wisdom and justice of their Maker and Governor thought proper to inflict, as well as incur a forfeiture of such blessings and privileges, both corporeal and intellectual, as he had bountifully bestowed upon them. And among these pains and penal sorrows, it is not at all improbable to suppose, that their kind and beneficent Maker let them know, that if they indulged their appetites and passions in sensuality and vice, in excess and intemperance, if they were carried away by the temptations of flesh or sense, to eat of such meats as they knew to be hurtful in their nature, or forbidden by their Maker, this would introduce diseases and pains into their animal nature, and expose their bodies to sickness and death, as well as their minds to the anguish of conscience, and the bitter reflections that would arise from their own abused powers and blessings.

Thirdly, it may also be very reasonably supposed, that God let his first human creatures know, either in some express manner, or by the sagacious dictates of their own reason, that they were to propagate their kind in their own likeness: And that if they continued in a holy and a happy state, their offspring should also be propagated holy and happy. But, on the other hand, if they abused their natural powers, if they lost the favour of their Maker by sinning against him, and incurred his displeasure, if they forfeited the sensual and intellectual blessings they enjoyed, if they impaired their animal or their rational powers by a criminal abuse of them, and brought folly and misery, sickness and pain, diseases and death into their natures; it is probable, I say, that God gave them

some evident intimations, that they should bring forth their offspring under these degenerate, enfeebled, and unhappy circumstances, according to the law and constitution of their natures. And we may well suppose, that such a constitution of things, and such notice of it given to the first parents of mankind, would be a much more effectual motive to them to continue in the practice of religion and virtue, and a more powerful guard against their indulgence of sin, than if merely their own single happiness or misery were to have been the consequence or effects of it.

Fourthly, let us further suppose, what is sufficiently evident to our daily observation and experience, that all mankind are now a degenerate, feeble, and unhappy race of beings, that we are become sinners in the sight of God, and exposed to his anger: It is manifest enough, that this whole world is a fallen, sinful, and rebellious province of God's dominion, and under the actual displeasure of its righteous Creator and Governor. The overspreading deluge of folly and error, iniquity and misery, that covers the face of the earth, gives abundant ground for such a supposition. The experience of every man on earth affords a strong and melancholy proof, that our reasoning powers are easily led away into mistake and falsehood, wretchedly bribed and biassed by prejudices, and daily overpowered by some corrupt appetites or passions, and our wills led astray to choose evil instead of good. The best of us sometimes break the laws of our Maker, by contradicting the rules of piety and virtue which our own reason and consciences suggest to us. There is none righteous perfectly; no, not one. Nor is there one person upon earth free from troubles and difficulties, and pains and sorrows, such as testify some resentments of our Maker. Even from our infancy, our diseases, pains and sorrows begin, and it is very remarkably evident in some families, that these pains and diseases, the gout, the foul disease, frenzy, &c. are propagated to the offspring, as they were sometimes contracted by the vices of the parents; and particular vicious inclinations, as well as particular distempers, are conveyed from parents to children sometimes through several generations. The best of us are not free from irregular propensities and passions even in the younger parts of life, and as our years advance, our sins break out, and continue more or less through all our lives. Our whole race then are plainly degenerate, sinful, and guilty before God, and under some tokens of his anger.

Though I own that I borrow this set of thoughts from the Bible, as well as from reason and observation, yet I would say as little as possible to awaken your opposition; and therefore I say not now, whether God made one pair of human creatures or more; I do not here determine, whether mankind sinned at once and fell from God, and their duty, and their happiness, in one single family, or in one generation; or whether it came by a more slow and gradual degeneracy, by increasing habits of vice, by the evil influence of vicious examples, or by a complicated consent of multitudes, rebelling against their Maker. In my present discourse, as far as possible, I would avoid every thing that might give you any uneasiness; and therefore I confine myself here to suppose only those things which may be very probably supposed by the exercise of our reasoning powers, upon the past and present condition of mankind throughout the world.

You know, *Logisto*, that I take it for granted, according to our scripture, that God made but one pair of first parents, Adam and Eve, and that they having broken the law of their God, have exposed themselves and their posterity to such a forfeiture of their privileges, to such a disorder in their rational and animal powers, to disease and sorrow, misery, and death. But I propose to you nothing else at present but an hypothesis.

Fifthly, suppose that our good and gracious God, in compassion to this sinful and miserable race of creatures, has continued to them many of the forfeited comforts of this life, has maintained their animal nature in some degrees of ease, and health, and vigour, and given them sun and rain, and food and gladness, that they might trace out the goodness of their Maker: Suppose he has also preserved their reasoning powers in such a measure of strength, as that they have a natural ability to search out the knowledge of their Maker, and the most important rules of their duty to him, and to their fellow-creatures, though with much more pains and difficulty, and uncertainty, than in their primitive state. Suppose also, that they are not only able to find out the main original points of religion and virtue, which God requires of an innocent creature, by the due exercise of their reason, but that their reasoning powers are also naturally sufficient to inform them what an offending creature must do, in order to obtain any hopes of pardon and acceptance with an offended God, that is, that they must practise hearty repentance for past sins, prayer for divine forgiveness, and watchful endeavours to fulfil all duty, and avoid every sin for time to come. I suppose, therefore, that though mankind, according to the constitution and law of the propagation of their natures, is brought into the world under unhappy circumstances, with prejudices against truth and goodness, and propensities to evil, yet there is in the nature of man still, such a principle of reason and conscience remaining, as now and then gives him secret hints and intimations of the differences of good and evil, and the different consequences of them: And that if all these hints were duly attended to, and rightly pursued, they would lead him to true repentance, and give him encouraging hopes of acceptance in the sight of God. And this rational principle I have granted, is found in some considerable degrees among the more learned and polite nations; nor are the most rude and unpolished tribes of mankind utterly destitute of it: And perhaps this is full as much as can be any way claimed, by a degenerate and sinful race of creatures, at the hands of an offended Creator and righteous Governor. But I proceed,

Sixthly, let us suppose farther, in order to vindicate the justice and goodness of God in his conduct toward mankind, that he has made some particular and express revelation and discovery of his own laws, and his intended grace and mercy towards man, in his degenerate state; and that this discovery of duty and grace has been made to all mankind, that is, to all who are the parents and progenitors of the present race of mortals; and that it was committed to them for the use of themselves and their offspring. Suppose that God had, in some express manner, taught them what they should do as men, to please him, and as sinners, to remove his anger, and to become afresh interested in his love, and to obtain happiness in a way of religion. And suppose after this, that mankind, or at least the greatest part of them, should have neglected to practise these rules of religion, or to transmit them to their offspring, is the wisdom and goodness of God bound to be perpetually renewing his discoveries of grace and mercy to every age? Is it not sufficiently manifest, in the nature of things, that parents should provide for their children's safety? Has not God wrought it in some measure, into the very constitution of men, that they should take care of the welfare and happiness of their offspring? What is that natural and almost universal tenderness that is found in parents towards their children? Is it not a dictate of the God of nature to them, that they might take care of the true happiness of those whom they bring into the world, and that in their relations to

God, as well as their relations to this world? And has not the great and blessed God done all that justice or equity could require for such a sinful and rebellious race of creatures, if he has taught one generation the way to recover his favour and happiness, and has wrought this principle not only into the powers of their reason, but even into their animal natures, that parents should take care of the welfare of their offspring, and should teach them the rules of duty and felicity?

Seventhly, suppose again, that notwithstanding all this care and goodness of the blessed God in revealing his laws, and his grace, that mankind by degrees have corrupted themselves again, and run into such a universal practice of impiety and vice, that God has manifested his indignation against their sins, and their neglect of religion, by a universal destruction of their whole race, excepting a few families. Suppose he has taught religion afresh to these few families who were saved from the universal punishment and desolation, and impressed a deep sense of his justice, and of the evil of sin, upon their minds, by this spreading ruin of their fellow-creatures: Suppose he has given further assurances of his grace and goodness, that if they repent, and do his will, and trust in his mercy, according to the methods he prescribed, they should be saved; yet after all, in some successive generations, the greatest part of them corrupt themselves again, and grow rebels against their Maker: What shall be said in a way of vindication or apology for such a race of criminals, who are neither to be kept in their duty by examples of vengeance, or discoveries of grace? What is there can reasonably be alleged by way of accusation against the justice and goodness of the great God, if he leave them to perish in their wilful ignorance and rebellion?

While I have been representing this matter, *Logisto*, while I have been shewing the repeated discoveries of grace and duty made to all mankind, I know you are so well acquainted with the Bible, that your thoughts must needs run upon the grace manifested to Adam and Eve after their first sin, when God taught them sacrifices, and, without doubt, promised them pardon and peace, and gave them intimations of a Saviour and salvation, in much plainer language and greater variety, than the short history of Moses can be supposed to contain in a page or two in the book of Genesis: And I doubt not but when I speak of some universal vengeance destroying sinful man, and of a second revelation of grace made to all mankind, who were saved out of the general destruction of the world, you readily apprehend the four couple of persons saved out of the general deluge in the ark, that is, *Noah, with his three sons, and all their wives:* And yet, even after all these instances of vengeance and grace, mankind grew most abominably ignorant, corrupt, and profligate, vicious and profane, in most of the families of the world.

Now is the blessed God bound in every age of mankind to renew the discoveries of his mercy and their duty, of the true religion and the way of salvation, and that to every family, when it is evident that he had twice made such discoveries to all mankind in the family of Adam, and in that of Noah, who were the two progenitors of all human nature, in different ages? And especially, since we believe, God had both inclined and commanded the heads of these families, Adam and Noah, to instruct their children in these most important concerns, and since he had so wrought into the constitution of every parent a natural tender concern for the welfare of all their offspring, to influence them to communicate these instructions. Has not God, the wise and the merciful, done all that justice can require, toward the propagation of the superadded light of grace through

all the world, besides the common light of reason which is continued to them, and which in itself is naturally and remotely sufficient to lead them to religion and happiness?

Give me leave, sir, to state this case in two similitudes, and see whether the equity and goodness of God, the Creator and Governor of the world, may not be thereby sufficiently vindicated in his conduct towards mankind.

The first similitude is this: Suppose a sovereign prince has found the inhabitants of some city of his dominion breaking the general laws of his kingdom, and rebelling against him, and on that account they are banished from that city, and from the king's presence, into a distant province, where they continue in their rebellion; their posterity are born under this banishment, and yet still rebel, and break the laws of their prince, and by degrees forget these laws, and lose the knowledge of their duty. Suppose at any time the king publishes an act of grace, wherein he reveals their general duty to them afresh, and further declares to them, that whosoever of this race of rebels will repent of their crimes, will ask forgiveness upon their knees, will renew their oath of allegiance, obey his will, and trust in his mercy, shall be restored to their city and to the king's presence and favour. The king having appointed this method of grace, and published it to all the rebels, he justly expects that that generation and their posterity should carefully transmit the knowledge of their duty to their offspring, and that all should conform themselves both to his general laws and to the appointed methods in this act of grace, till he himself shall alter it: And whatsoever new or further methods this absolute sovereign shall appoint to them hereafter, for the obtaining his favour, all that hear of it, both they and their children, are bound to comply with it, if ever they would find favour at court. The king doth not think himself obliged every year, nor every age, to give the rising generation a new and immediate promulgation of his general laws, nor of this act of grace, nor to repeat to them over again the testimony and proofs of its royalty and authority. Yet the children being rebels still, may be still justly continued in their banishment, for their own and their parents' rebellion, if they do not comply with the appointed method in the act of grace which was published in their great grandfather's days.

Is it not a common case among mankind, that when any king makes a law with a penalty, and publishes it once through his whole nation, he doth not think himself bound to publish this anew, as often as new subjects are born in his dominions? And yet not only all the present subjects, but their posterity also, who break this law, are, in the common sense of mankind, liable to the penalty, because it is supposed, that nature obliges men to communicate such necessary knowledge to their own offspring. Much less would any king who freely published an act of grace to rebels, think himself obliged in justice to repeat the publication of this act to every new generation of rebels who should arise, and continue in the known and wilful rebellion of their fathers; for since he was not obliged to make any such act of grace at first, he can never be obliged to repeat the proclamation of it.

But let it be supposed yet further, that the king of the country should hear of the continued rebellion of those subjects, and that they had persisted in the violation of his laws, and despised and rejected, forgotten and lost the proclamations of his grace; and suppose he should send his army to destroy all that race of rebels, except a few families, in order to manifest his just indignation against their crimes, and thereby awaken those that were left to a more awful sense of the majesty and justice of their king, and of their own duties to him: Yet further, we will suppose he should send

another proclamation of mercy to these few families that he had spared out of the general slaughter, with some plainer discoveries of his royal goodness in it, and repeat afresh to them what duties they should perform, in order to partake of this mercy: Now if after all this discovery both of his justice and his grace, this race of rebels, in two or three generations, should so abandon themselves to all manner of disobedience, should despise this new proclamation of mercy, and giving themselves up to riot and folly, should lose the knowledge of the laws, and grace of their sovereign, what possible apology could be made for this wretched race of rebels, why they should not be continued in their banishment, and under the displeasure of their king?

The rebellious children of these rebel subjects may complain indeed, that they were never told, nor did they know the general laws of the kingdom, nor were they acquainted with the particular acts of grace, and these special appointed methods of obtaining pardon and favour. But if the general laws of the kingdom were so far agreeable to the laws of reason and nature, that if they would but seriously consider with themselves, and set their reason at work in good earnest, they might find out not only these general laws, but so much also of the particular methods of grace, as to get some hope of pardon and acceptance, if they sincerely practised them; then, I say, these children are highly criminal for not applying their rational powers to the work, and for not seeking out and practising all that was within the verge and compass of their natural powers, in order to be restored to the favour of the king. And such criminal creatures justly continue under the displeasure of their sovereign. It is granted indeed, that the parents who rebelled against the king, and brought up their offspring to rebellion and misery, who run counter to that compassion which nature gave them for their offspring, and by continuing in their rebellion lost the knowledge of the laws, and the grace of their king themselves, and never taught them to their children, are much more culpable than the children who never actually knew them: Yet the children are far from being innocent, since their natural powers, if they awakened them to a right and careful exercise, might lead them to so much knowledge of the laws, and methods of grace of their sovereign, as, if sincerely practised, they might hope to find mercy with him. The king may be wise, and just, and gracious still, and yet the race of rebels may be in such circumstances, that not one in a thousand are ever likely to be restored to his favour.

Take the thing in a little different view, under another similitude: Suppose any particular family upon earth had some painful and mortal disease hereditary to the house, derived from the vices of their parents, and more rooted in their constitution by their own personal vices; and suppose the blessed God had communicated a divine receipt or medicine to their whole family, which would relieve and heal every one that made use of it; is God obliged, by a miracle, or by inspiration, to restore the precious secret to this family, when they have lost it by their own guilty negligence? When the parents took no care to preserve the remedy, nor the children ever enquired for a cure? Or when they wandered after the most vain and most irrational pretences, and the most ridiculous experiments to heal themselves? Is it unjust for God to let them die under their disease? Do they not deserve to perish under their own distemper and folly?

Suppose yet further, that the wise and righteous God should, in the course of his providence, suffer this disease to spread itself, and rage with mortal fury in some single generation, so as to destroy the whole race, except seven or eight persons. Now by such a dreadful spectacle of death and desolation, these persons must have a very terrible

sense of this mortal distemper impressed upon their minds: And suppose God should again discover to this surviving family the noble medicine whereby they might be healed of this distemper: Suppose this family should publish the terrors of the late universal destruction, together with the precious remedy, to the following generations, as Noah published the history of the flood, and the laws and grace of God; yet if all this be despised and neglected by their posterity, and the late desolation, as well as the new notice of the medicine, be banished from all their thoughts, and forgotten in a few ages, what can be said in excuse for them, or what accusation can be brought against the wisdom, justice, or goodness of God, if they are suffered to go on and die.

The crime is yet more inexcusable, and the justice and goodness of God yet more defensible, if we suppose some chief ingredients of this sovereign medicine, which make a great part of the composition, to be in some sense within the natural reach of their own faculties to find out, and within the native power of their hands to acquire and compose; so far at least as would greatly relieve the distemper, and give them comfortable hopes of healing, if they searched it out, and used it. But if these wretched creatures under a mortal disease will never exercise their thoughts about a cure, will never employ their reason carefully and diligently to search and find out the proper ingredients, nor use their hands to attempt the composition, but will trifle away all their time in riot and sensuality, in dancing and singing, regardless of their own lives, what reasonable charge or censure can be brought against the great Governor of the world, for permitting them to go on to death in their own madness?

This is the case of mankind among the savage nations of the earth, who were all derived from Adam and Noah, their fathers, to whom the laws of God, and the methods of grace and salvation were communicated by God himself, and who took care to inform their immediate posterity, what the world suffered by disobedience to God, at the fall and the flood, and took care also to teach them those truths and duties by the belief and practice of which they might be saved. It is probable, that some of these families did retain true religion for several ages: But in a few ages, others despised and lost the truths and duties of true religion; every generation grew worse than their fathers; and now whole nations, without one exception, are led away by prejudices and sensuality into endless follies, errors, and impieties, without any care or effort of mind to recover the knowledge of the laws of their Maker, or the methods of his grace. A due survey of this last consideration will most effectually refute that wild and unreasonable charge against our doctrine, *as if the great God left all the world, except the Jews, for four thousand years together, destitute of sufficient means to do their duty, and to obtain his favour;* which is as false as I believe the book of Genesis is true, and has not so much as a colour of argument to support it.

But before I leave this head of the shameful degeneracy, and gross apostasy of the heathen world, I cannot but take notice of one very remarkable aggravation of the crime both of parents and children, and that is, that though several of these nations in a few ages lost and abandoned the worship of the true God, the knowledge of his laws, and the discoveries of his grace, though the parents took no care to communicate them to their children, nor the children to retain any notices of them; yet these very nations are most obstinately tenacious of the idolatry and impious ceremonies, the savage and the vicious customs and practices of their ancestors; and their parents are as careful to teach them, and to breed them up in these iniquities and errors. If you ask the wild Americans,

the Laplanders, the Hottentots, the reason of their ridiculous opinions and practices, their universal answer is, that *it is the custom of their nation, and their fathers and their grandfathers, for many ages, have believed and done so before them.* This, in their esteem, is a sacred and sufficient reason for their immovable perseverance in their own nonsense and madness: So impiously fond have they been of the tradition of their ancestors, in their profane and vicious customs, while they so soon and so easily parted with the rules of virtue and religion, and the promises and hopes of grace and salvation, which their ancestors taught them. And thus the very same humour and practice, which has had so strong and fatal an influence to maintain and propagate superstition, impiety, and vice among them, is a heinous aggravation of their crime in losing the rules of virtue, religion, and happiness, since the same reverence for their early ancestors, the same temper and practice would have preserved the truths, duties, and rules of virtue and religion. It is time now to proceed to the next consideration, in order to vindicate the justice and goodness of God in the present constitution of things.

In the eighth place therefore, suppose that none of the race of mankind, whatsoever advantages or disadvantages they lie under, shall ever be condemned in the other world for the neglect of any duties, but what their own reason was in a practical and proximate sense sufficient to find out: Now there are a sufficient number of these neglects to bring condemnation upon every part of the heathen world, whether learned or barbarous. Suppose that no creature shall be punished hereafter for any sin but what was some way or other committed against his own light or conscience, or for a plain wilful neglect of seeking further knowledge of truth and duty, by such means as were plainly and practically within their reach: Suppose that the great Judge at last shall pass a sentence of death upon no soul but who shall be made to recollect his own guilty conduct, either by opposing the dictates of his conscience, by stifling convictions of sin or duty, by suppressing some inward principles or tendencies towards truth or virtue, or at least by a wilful neglect to pursue such hints of knowledge as have been given him in the course of providence, or by the good Spirit of God: Will not this thought fairly relieve the objection, and vindicate the honour of the divine perfections: It is the character of the heathens, *Rom.* i. 18, 23, 28. *that they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, that they held the truth in unrighteousness;* they stifled the dictates of their own minds; *and when they knew God, they would not glorify him as God. Even the wise men of the nations,* who were acquainted with the true God, wilfully complied with national idolatries, to the scandal of their own reason, and the great provocation of their Maker, so that he gave them up to judicial blindness, for their own vile abuse of the light of their reason and consciences. Is not the great Governor of the universe to be justified in this conduct?

The design of the day of judgment is to justify or condemn men *according to their works,* and to make the equity of the great God, as Governor of the world, appear in that sentence of justification or condemnation; and therefore I am inclined to believe, that no person in that day shall fall under the condemning sentence of the Judge, but who shall also be judged and condemned by his own awakened conscience, for those very things upon which his condemnation proceeds from the lips of the Judge. *Every mouth will be stopped* by such a procedure as this, and all the heathen world who shall be condemned in that day, shall be made to recollect their own resistance of conscience, and their wilful neglects, and by the light of their own reason shall confess the justice of the sentence, and the equity of him that condemns.

Though it has been sufficiently proved, that the barbarous and savage nations of the earth have not a proximate and practical sufficiency in their reasoning powers to find out the necessary truths and duties of religion, in order to obtain happiness, yet perhaps every single creature amongst them had a practical and proximate sufficiency to find out and know more of God and their duty, and to practise more rules of virtue than they ever actually found or practised. And let it be added also, that if there were any soul amongst them that had followed the leadings of his own reason and conscience, together with every beam of light, or hint of knowledge that occurred in the course of life, the blessed God would have manifested his goodness in giving that soul some further hints of the necessary truths and duties of religion. It is a universal law of heaven, *To him that hath*, that is, improveth what he hath, *more shall be given:* And I am persuaded, God would never withhold his hand from communicating further hints of knowledge, till he sees the creature wilfully stop short of what he might attain, and neglect or suppress some intimations of truth or duty, which one way or other were suggested to him. It is rebelling against some degree of light that provoketh God to withhold grace from man, and would vindicate divine justice in its severest sentence. But in the

Ninth place, as there is infinite variety of degrees of guilt in particular persons, and their conduct in this world, there shall be the same variety of the degrees of punishment in the world to come. *Every man shall be judged* according to the advantages he enjoyed. *More is required* from those whose advantages were greater, and their guilt is more heinous in abusing or neglecting them. God the all-knowing and the righteous will weigh every circumstance, both of his favours, and our use or abuse of them, in the nicest balance, and his sentence shall bear an exact proportion to the demerits of every sinner. *He that knew not his Master's will, shall be beaten but with few stripes*, in comparison with those criminals who knew it and fought against it. Suppose, therefore, that the punishment of these rudest and most stupid nations of the earth, in the future world, shall be exceeding small, in proportion to the very small degrees of light and knowledge which they have enjoyed, or which have lain fairly and practically within their reach, will not this greatly relieve the difficulty? And if even these lightest punishments which shall be assigned to the most ignorant part of the heathen world, should be thought something severe, yet none can be thought utterly unjust, if, as was before mentioned, none are punished, but for acting in some measure against the light of their own minds. Now, sir, if we could put all these nine suppositions together, and place them in such a happy situation, as that they might, with their full force, project all their light upon this single spot of darkness in Divine Providence, about the state and circumstances of the heathen world, I persuade myself they would illustrate this gloomy scene, they would clear up the difficulties, and relieve the charges which are cast upon the conduct of Divine justice and goodness in this affair.

Let us suppose, that mankind at first were placed in happy circumstances, with a rich sufficiency of natural powers, to prolong and continue their own happiness through all their immortality, by knowing and doing their Master's will: Suppose they had some proper notice given them, that if they sinned against God, they should not only expose themselves, but their offspring also, to a forfeiture of the blessings they enjoyed, and should introduce pains, and weaknesses, and death, into their natures: Suppose it also evident, from observation and experience, from the weaknesses both of flesh and spirit,

from the pains and miseries of human nature, as well as from the universal corruption of morals in the world, that mankind has sinned against God, and is become a fallen and degenerate race of beings, under actual tokens of his displeasure; yet that they are not so utterly divested of their original powers and blessings, but that they have many of the comforts of this life left them to trace out the goodness of their Maker, and also a natural capacity to find out their duty, if they exerted this capacity to the utmost: Suppose yet further, that God has made several new discoveries both of his nature, his laws, and his grace, as well as of the severity of his punishing justice, to those families of mankind whence all the rest have been derived; but by degrees their criminal negligence, their irreligion, and their sensual vices have prevailed so far, as in some nations to blot out the remembrance of the true God, his laws, and his grace from amongst them: May not the goodness and justice of God be sufficiently vindicated, if these criminal nations are abandoned by heaven, and fall under divine punishment, for these abominable offences? And especially if the justice of God proceed no further against them than to condemn and punish them for those offences only, which have been committed against some evident inward or outward manifestation of their duty, and the actual light of their own consciences; which offences being comparatively but few in number, call for a much lighter punishment than those sinners whose consciences have had higher degrees of light communicated to them in jewish or christian nations.

Sophronius. I thank you heartily, *Pithander*, for the large repetition you have given us of your last Sunday-morning's sermon, for I was then at church, and heard it with great satisfaction.

Pithander. I acknowledge, sir, I espied you there, and was almost ashamed to think how much I had borrowed from your discourse, in some of these conferences, toward the composition of that sermon; but gratitude and justice demand my hearty thanks to *Sophronius*, for I am constrained to confess, that I was not so well skilled in this controversy when I entered the list with *Logisto:* And I am resolved, sir, for your sake, henceforth to entertain a better opinion of those who are not entirely with me in all the rites, laws, and powers of an established church. Thus I have learned at once from your agreeable conversation both wisdom and charity.

Sophronius. You overwhelm me, sir, with honours and civilities. I hope this conference hath not passed without my own considerable improvement, and am glad to find growing charity among all that profess the christian name, which I shall always endeavour to promote and cultivate; for without it I can never approve myself a disciple of the blessed Jesus.

Logisto. Gentlemen, your mutual compliments return so thick on each other, that I have scarce room to put in my thanks to both of you, for the information I have received from both. I was wondering, indeed, how *Pithander* came to deliver so long a discourse, in so regular a method and connexion on the sudden in free conversation: But *Sophronius* hath explained it to me, when he saith, it is the repetition of his sermon last Sunday. I acknowledge your goodness, *Pithander*, that you have given me the pleasure of hearing this excellent discourse, though I was not so good as to be at church: I must confess, sir, these suppositions or considerations of yours are not at all improbable, and carry a good force of argument with them. You give me a little better opinion of the Bible than I had before, since it teaches you to unfold such a difficulty, and to shew us that God may be wise and good, notwithstanding the present wretched condition of the

heathens, who overspread so great a part of this earth where we dwell. But then there is another difficulty ariseth here, and it is the very last I shall mention. "Has God, who is so wise and good a Being, left the greatest part of his creation to become finally miserable?" Is this consistent with the designs of a Being who possesses infinite goodness and equal wisdom?

Pithander. Truly, sir, the scripture seems to inform us, that there are but few which shall be saved: Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leads to life, and they are but few who find it; whereas the way to destruction is broad, and crowded with multitudes; *Matt.* vii. 13, 14. And the apostle John tells us, that though we who believe in Christ are of God, yet the whole world lieth in wickedness; 1 *John* v. 19. And if at last it should prove, that there are far greater numbers condemned to bear the anger of their Maker, than those who enjoy his love, they have nothing justly to complain of but their own ill conduct, since they shall be all condemned, even by their own consciences. God is just, even though all his creatures should make themselves miserable.

Sophronius. Will you give me leave, *Pithander*, to try whether, upon some principles of philosophy and the rules of government, together with some charitable turns of thought, I may not be able to give satisfactory answers to the present inquiry and objection of *Logisto*.

Pithander. With all my heart, sir, and I shall be happy to learn from you any further methods of relieving the difficulties that are supposed to attend the conduct of Providence in its transactions with the race of men.

Sophronius. In the first place, then, what if I should venture to tell you of another supposition that has been raised from some charitable turns of thought concerning those rude and barbarous nations, those guilty and unhappy creatures, who lived and died in ignorance and vice, whose parents had lost the knowledge of God and their duty before they were born, and who never came within the reach of the gospel in any of the dispensations of it, either by Noah or Abraham, Moses or Christ. What if we should suppose these wretches, by the overflowing mercy of God, should be favoured with some other state of trial or probation, before the final sentence of the last day condemns them to perpetual misery? You know some persons have supposed, that in the invisible regions, where sinful spirits are kept, the souls of the rebels who were disobedient in the days of Noah, and were drowned in the flood, enjoyed the preaching of the gospel by Jesus Christ himself, and that after they had lain in prison and punishment some thousands of years, Christ went into hell for that purpose; 1 *Pet.* iii. 19. and preached to the spirits in prison, who were once disobedient. Now, what if these guilty and unhappy creatures, who never had any opportunity to acquaint themselves with the true God and his worship, and with any dispensation of his mercy, shall be raised again in the second resurrection, after the millennium, or the happy state of the church is expired? And after they have sustained punishment for their former madness and folly, from the time of their death till that day, what if they should be put upon another trial under the dispensation of christianity, that so none of all the race of Adam may be finally condemned, without having the actual knowledge of the gospel, at least in some or other of the ancient or later dispensations of it? This would not afford the least glimpse of hope to those sinners who have finally rejected the divine revelations which have been made to them under any of the dispensations of the gospel, and especially

under the light of christianity: Yet this would solve every difficulty, and remove every pretence against the justice of God, in his present conduct towards heathens. It is true, I cannot say that I can find this in my Bible; but a very learned and ingenious divine of the church of England, who wrote about thirty years ago, thinks he hath found it there, and that is Mr. Staynoe, in his first volume of the Salvation of Man by Jesus Christ, to which Essay on this subject I refer you; but I venture no further into these depths and unsearchables of the divine counsel: Yet it must be confessed, that if there should be any other state of trial appointed for those unhappy creatures, whom God is said to wink at in the days of their ignorance, *Acts* xvii. 30. and, perhaps, for this reason he is said to wink at them, because he intended another state of probation for them; I say, if there should be such a state, it is not improbable, that vast multitudes of them might repent and believe, and be saved.

Pithander. This is a very strange supposition indeed; and I think there might be considerable objections raised against it from several places of scripture.

Sophronius. I only mentioned it, sir, as a supposition that is not impossible; for I cannot say that I come heartily into it, and therefore I will not undertake to be an advocate for it. Permit me then to make yet another supposition, in which many of our divines seem to have been encouraged by scripture; and that is, that before the final shutting up of the theatre of this world, there may probably be a long space of time, at least a thousand years, wherein virtue, religion, piety, and happiness, shall be spread over the world as universally as vice and misery are now. Suppose also in this millennium there be a more regular and numerous propagation of mankind, when at the same time there shall be no wars, no public calamities and spreading depopulations of the world, would not this blessed scene of things go a great way to provide and prepare such multitudes of inhabitants for the heavenly regions, as might nearly equal the numbers of sinners in the six thousand years past?

But suppose after all, it shall be found in the great day of decision, that far the greatest part of the inhabitants of this our world have been wilful criminals against the laws of their Maker, and fall under a sentence of condemnation and punishment; and suppose that, upon the whole, it must be acknowledged, that there are some degrees of severity exercised by the Lord and Governor of the universe against the inhabitants of this little globe of earth, why may he not choose to make the final impenitents of this our sinful world a monument of his punishing justice, his hatred of sin, and his vindication of his own injured honour? Why may he not set them up as an awful warning to millions of inhabitants of upper and larger worlds of his dominion, in comparison whereof, perhaps, this earth is no bigger than the prison of Newgate, when compared with the large and spacious cities of London and Westminster?

Is it esteemed any unreasonable severity in the government of Great Britain, if twenty or thirty prisoners in Newgate are capitally punished every year, in order to deter the millions of inhabitants of these two great cities from the like crimes? Does not every governor find it proper and necessary that there should be some examples made of executing and sustaining the penalties of the law, when villains, by their own crimes, have incurred these penalties? Does not prudence itself sometimes see it needful, by such executions, to vindicate the wisdom and justice of the government, to maintain the authority of the laws, and to secure the rest of the subjects in their constant obedience? And may not a sovereign prince choose which criminals he pleases to pardon in a rebel-

lious province, and which of them he will make a monument of terror to preserve the honour of his government, and due obedience to his laws? And if by this means he secures millions of his subjects in their allegiance to himself, and in the enjoyment of a thousand happy privileges, which he has bestowed upon them, who can say, that this sovereign has acted any thing unbecoming a wise or a gracious ruler?

Alas! sir, we have too ambitious and overweening a conceit of ourselves, when we imagine, that we, who dwell on this little spot of ground, are the whole of the intellectual creation of God; or even that we make any great or considerable part of it. Perhaps the world of those spirits which we call angels, may be as large and numerous as ours: There are many ranks and degrees of them, thrones and principalities, dominions and powers. The multitudes of their armies are ten thousand times ten thousand: And there may be some reason to think, that even all these ranks of intelligent creatures are but an inconsiderably small portion of the intellectual works of God. Perhaps most, if not all these orders of angels, might be formed with a regard to this earth only, to be divine agents and messengers to manage the affairs of this terrestrial province of God's dominion. It is possible, that all the intellectual creatures of which God has given us an account, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of the Revelation, have some special relation to this little world of ours. Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation? *Heb.* i. 14. And the fallen angels in the grand scheme of God's universal government, perhaps, have all their posts assigned to them, by divine order, or by divine permission, to transact no other affairs but what relate to mankind. It is possible, that all we call angels and devils, are only God's invisible ministers of this his kingdom of visible creatures called men, both in their bodied and unbodied state. Why may not his other visible dominions among the stars, which I shall point out presently, have also their proper ranks of invisible ministers, by which his providence and government may be carried on among them?

Let us consider yet further, what innumerable ranks of beings may be found in the vast universe which God has made, superior both to men and angels, in a gradation almost infinite. Let us think of the astonishing varieties and gradations of beings belonging to this our globe, in air, on earth, or in the sea, which lie in the descending scale of creatures betwixt the nature of man, and the nature of an oyster, or if there be any animal of lower life: And why may there not be another variety and gradation of beings as vast and astonishing in the ascending scale of existences, all superior to us, and yet the highest of them infinitely beneath God, its Maker? Surely the wisdom of God hath an inexhaustible sufficiency of invention to contrive, and his power to produce such gradations and such varieties. How audacious a thing is it, then, for such little creeping animals, who dwell on this clod of clay, to fancy ourselves so large a part of the workmanship of God, or so considerable a portion of his extensive dominions? And since we are a sinful race of creatures, who have fallen from our original state of holiness and felicity, why may not the blessed God think fit to make the greatest part of our rebellious world a monument of his just resentment against sin, while other numerous ranks of beings abide firm in their duty and in their happiness, and, perhaps, are confirmed in their allegiance and felicity, partly by the warning they receive from the revolt and punishment of the inhabitants of this earthly globe.

It is generally now agreed by philosophers, that the planetary worlds, such as Mars, Venus, Jupiter, and Saturn, are replenished with inhabitants, as well as this earth, which

is a planetary body like themselves. They are placed in such a situation to the sun, which is a central fire, and are carried round it in certain periods of time, so as to receive light and heat from it in proportion to their distances and their revolutions, just as our earth does; and they seem to be as proper habitations for a variety of unknown creatures, as the globe on which we tread. Can we suppose that the air, the earth, and the water all round this our world should be thus replenished every where as it is, with multitudes of inhabitants, and all, in some measure, under the dominion of mankind, whose race is propagated and spread all around it; and is there not as much reason to conceive, that these vast bulky bodies, the planets, which are so well fitted for the residence of animal and intellectual creatures, should be mere waste wildernesses, huge solitudes of lifeless matter, without any vital beings to replenish, possess, and adorn them? Without any intellectual tenants there, who may give God the glory of his works? This seems not only contrary to the dictates of reason, and to the appearances of nature round about us, but to the words of scripture itself; for the prophet Isaiah tells us, chapter xlv. verse 18. That the God who created the heavens, and formed the earth, and made it, he created it not in vain; he formed it to be inhabited: Whence the inference is very natural and obvious, that had he not formed it to be the habitation of some creatures, it had been made in vain.

And may we not make the same inference concerning those huge planetary globes of Saturn and Jupiter, which, perhaps, are two hundred times as big as this earth? They, surely, are made to be inhabited, and designed for some better and nobler purpose, than merely to give us mortals a little glimmering light in the absence of the moon, to direct a wandering ship at midnight, and to entertain the curiosity of an astronomer and his spying-glass. These seem to be purposes too low and mean, too little and inconsiderable for the prodigious vastness of those heavenly bodies, and the regularity of their situations and motions round the sun. The wisdom of a God does not aim at such poor and unworthy designs, by such stupendous fabrics as these rolling worlds. Caucasus, or Teneriff, or a taller mountain, if it were made only for the birth or residence of a mouse, would be a more proportionate contrivance, and, perhaps, a wiser design.

And what if we make yet another excursion beyond the circle wherein Saturn rolls, which is the most distant of our planetary globes? What if we suppose, with some modern virtuosos, that every fixed star is a sun, or central fire, to enlighten and warm a whole set of planetary worlds, which may roll round it? And what if all these worlds are furnished with intellectual inhabitants? What a stupendous idea shall we have of the magnificence of the works of God, and the extent of his innumerable dominions! Where is the hurt or danger of it, if we should yield to these reasonings, and to the philosophy of the age, so far as to imagine these innumerable worlds to be the appointed residences of conscious beings? Let us suppose them all inhabited by animal and intellectual creatures of God, and, perhaps, better peopled than this our earth is, especially if sin and death have not entered amongst them.

Now, though we are not favoured with the knowledge of the state, or laws, or circumstances of the inhabitants of those worlds, because we are a rebellious and criminal province of God's dominion, and deserve to dwell in ignorance and darkness; yet those upper regions and worlds may be favoured with a large and particular account of the state and circumstances of this earth, and of the conduct of God towards the rebel inhabitants of it: And this notice of the degeneracy and rebellion of mankind, together with

the severity of God, our common Governor, against a great part of men, may have a happy influence to secure their obedience, and to preserve the inhabitants of those worlds in an everlasting state of duty and happiness.

As it has pleased God, in his wisdom and goodness, to reveal to us the heavy and endless punishment he has inflicted on the evil angels for their first rebellion and disobedience, and has told us, "That he spared not the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell, and has reserved them in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day," and some greater punishment to ensue, in order to warn us of the dangerous crimes of pride and rebellion; 2 *Peter* ii. 4. *Jude* 6. 1 *Tim.* iii. 6. So it is very probable, that the same divine wisdom and goodness has made our crimes and punishments on this globe of earth a monument of his just severity, to give warning to some vast and unknown regions of upper worlds, lest they also should sin against their Maker, after our example, and fall under his dreadful displeasure, as mankind has done.

Though it should appear at the great day of judgment, that the largest part of the inhabitants of this our earth are condemned to greater or less degrees of unhappiness, yet, as I before hinted, perhaps all this earth, with all the number of its inhabitants put together, are not so much in comparison of the holy and happy worlds of intellectual beings which God has created, as Newgate is in comparison of the populous cities of Westminster and London: And if, by the punishment of a few criminals, there are millions preserved in duty and happiness, then the great and blessed God will have a spacious and most illustrious display of his goodness above and beyond the exercise of his more awful perfections of justice or vengeance: And even the exercise of these awful perfections upon a few of the subjects of his dominions, will become as it were a means in the hand of his goodness, to make millions of them for ever blessed.

Thus though the largest part of mankind may be sinful and unhappy, yet I am persuaded, that the far largest part of God's whole intelligent creation are holy and happy beings; and if there are some thousands of miserable immortal souls on this little globe, yet there may be, perhaps, above a thousand whole worlds of conscious beings, who are happy in the favour of the God who made them, who love and serve him, and rejoice in his love through all the ages of their immortality. How unreasonable is it then for us to pass a judgment either on the conduct of God, or on the state of his intellectual creation, by such a narrow and limited survey of his wisdom, justice, and goodness, as this our little planetary globe of earth can afford us?

Logisto. Well, *Sophronius*, I am wonderfully pleased with this last speech of yours. This seems effectually to secure the honour of the divine perfections against all charges, if you could shew us the inhabitants of these castles in the air, these ethereal worlds. But are not all these mere suppositions of wild fancy, and imaginary scenes? What certainty have you of such unknown creatures and unknown dominions of God the Creator?

Sophronius. It is granted, *Logisto*, that these are suppositions, but they are such suppositions as I have shewn you are plainly built upon principles of reason; the force of argument that maintains them is so strong, that, in my opinion, it rises to a very high degree of probability, and therefore they are not to be called imaginary scenes, or the airy castles of wild fancy. If these reasonings are good and solid, then it will follow, that these unknown worlds are so far from being mere fancies, that they are the solid and

real structures of God himself. Besides, sir, as I remember, it was mentioned by *Pithander*, that if we can but find out any such hypotheses or suppositions, which may solve real difficulties in the conduct of God and providence, this will effectually prove, that these difficulties are not insolvable; and much more effectual are they to remove these difficulties, when the reason of things so far conspires with these suppositions, as goes very near to prove them great realities.

Pithander. I am much inclined to come into these sentiments of *Sophronius*, since they carry such an appearance of reason and truth in them, and since they have so happy an effect as to represent far the greatest part of the intellectual works of God holy and happy, and hereby do so much honour to the equity and goodness of the great Creator.

Logisto. I cannot but approve such a scheme as this, which bestows virtue and happiness upon almost all the intelligent creatures of God; for I can hardly conceive, that ever a Being of such boundless wisdom, power, and goodness, should produce so many millions of creatures capable of pleasure and pain, felicity and misery, without designing and securing felicity to far the greatest part of them, as far as is consistent with the freedom of their will.

Sophronius. So far as things appear to me, *Logisto*, I cannot but agree with you in this sentiment; and by such considerations and reasonings as these, I think we have removed the grand difficulty that lay upon your mind with the greatest weight, *viz.* How it should come to pass, that so many thousand inhabitants of the heathen world, who are originally fallen from God, should go on from age to age in the neglect of God and virtue, still running on in the paths of misery, and be so far abandoned by their Creator, as not to have a practical and proximate sufficiency in their own reasoning powers, to guide and conduct them to religion and happiness.

But after all, sir, give me leave to say, that the nature of the great and blessed God is infinitely superior to all our powers and conceptions, his thoughts are so far above our thoughts, and his ways so far above our ways, that if there should remain such difficulties in the conduct of his providence towards his creatures, that we could not fairly account for by our reason, and by all our suppositions, yet we are still bound to believe matter of fact, when our reason, experience, and observation, assure us of the truth of it. We cannot but believe, that the heathen world actually lies in a dark and deplorable state; and yet, on the other hand, we are bound to believe, that the great God is perfectly wise, and righteous, and good. The ways and works of God may be unknown and unsearchable, but they can never be unjust. There may be infinite schemes within his comprehensive view, whereby his wisdom can reconcile those things which we know not how to reconcile. Those different propositions in the science of theology, as well as in mathematical learning, stand within his view in a most perfect and amiable consistency, which to our narrow thoughts appear so dissonant, and almost inconsistent. If there are such sort of seeming inconsistencies in some parts of geometry, when we run into the doctrines of infinites and incommensurables, which yet all stand right in the eye of God, much more may we suppose, that in the works of the great God, and his divine schemes and transactions, there may be many things which seem to us all difficulty and darkness, and yet before him they stand in the fairest and most easy light.

When St. Paul had considered the long darkness that lay upon the gentile world for many ages, the peculiar privilege of the Jews to be made, during those ages, the favourites

of God; when he considered again, these very favourites, almost the whole nation of them, so far left as to abuse the Son of God himself, to run into infidelity, and thereby to be abandoned of God, their Benefactor and their King; when again, in prophetic vision, after this once favourite people had continued long under unbelief, guilt, and misery, he saw that they should be recovered, and restored to the true religion, and the favour of God, in his xi. chapter to the Romans, with what ecstasy of devout surprise and adoration does he conclude his discourse! "God hath shut up both the gentiles and the Jews, by turns, under unbelief, that he might have mercy upon both, in his own season: God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor! Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, to whom be glory for ever. *Amen.*

Logisto. I know not how to make a sufficient acknowledgment to you, gentlemen, for the favour you have done me, and the light you have given me in these conferences. I am fully satisfied, that the bulk of the heathen world is in a very dark and deplorable state; and amongst those who have lost all traditional knowledge of divine revelation, their own reason is far from being sufficient in any practical sense, as you have explained it, to lead them to virtue, religion, and happiness. Upon a just review, I am convinced, that had I been so unhappy as to be born amongst them, my reasoning powers would have been exercised to no better purpose than theirs are: For why should I be so vain as to imagine myself the wisest man among so many thousands of the present age, and the millions of former generations? I begin to see there is a necessity of some better advantages, in order to reform mankind, and to render them wise, and pious, and happy: Nor do I know how this can be attained, but by some favourable discoveries sent from heaven: And as for all other religions, that in our age pretend to divinity and revelation, it is evident in itself, that none of them can compare with the doctrines of the New Testament, either for its own internal excellency, or the outward proofs that it came from God. I must confess, therefore, I think I am come as far as King Agrippa, when he heard Paul's apology for himself; for you have almost persuaded me to become a christian.

Pithander. Permit me, sir, in the language of St. Paul, to make my reply: Would to God that not you only, but all the young gentlemen of our age, who have been tempted to abandon the religion of their fathers, and to forsake the gospel, and the faith in which they were educated, would bethink themselves ere it be too late, become not only almost, but altogether as firm believers in Christ as I profess myself to be.

Sophronius. And as you have done me the honour, gentlemen, to put me into the place of the learned, and made me your moderator during this conference, I ask leave now to resign this honour and office; and since *Pithander* has formed such a benevolent and pious wish, I take pleasure to occupy the place of the unlearned, and confirm it with a most sincere and devout *Amen.*

HUMILITY

REPRESENTED IN

THE CHARACTER OF ST. PAUL,

THE

CHIEF SPRINGS OF IT OPENED,

AND

ITS VARIOUS ADVANTAGES DISPLAYED;

TOGETHER

WITH SOME OCCASIONAL VIEWS OF THE CONTRARY VICE.

THE

PREFACE.

I HOPE there will be something found in these papers, which is suited to rectify the vicious disorders of the mind, to subdue the foolish vanity of human nature, and promote a meek and humble spirit: But I am sure, they can have no such influence, while they continue to sleep in a desk where they have lain many years already. If the divine grace shall so far attend the publication of them now, as to make them attain these happy ends, my duty will be thankfulness and praise.

While I have endeavoured to trace out the pride of the heart in the various and general appearances of it both in higher and lower life, I have carefully avoided the particular description of any person living. By this means my representation of true humility in the moral and religious springs and advantages of it, together with some views of the opposite vice, may have a more kindly and powerful effect upon every reader. Conviction and reproof are much better received when such hints only are given, as may lead conscience in secret to search out the criminals, and may teach them to set their own folly and guilt and danger before themselves. We all like to do this work best in retirement and silence. And I hope my readers will be so kind and so just both to themselves and to me, as to be more diligent in the discovery and cure of any weakness of their own, than in pointing out censure for their neighbours: Though it must be confessed there is sufficient matter for it in every corner of the world. Surely if we could but look down upon mankind with an all-surveying eye as the great God doth, we should see a dreadful and universal spread of this vice of pride over all the race of man, and an infinite number of mischiefs derived from it, and diffused through kingdoms and churches, through all human societies and personal affairs. Had we such a view as this, one would think every son and daughter of Adam should labour night and day to root out this cursed and poisonous plant, till not a branch or fibre of it remained to infect the earth. Pride was the ruin of angels: Pride was the fall of man: "Ye shall be as gods," was the great temptation, and the event is we are become like devils: Nor doth the array of flesh and blood which we wear, cover our shame or excuse our iniquity.

God has sent his Son Jesus into the world in the likeness of man, and in all the forms of humiliation, that he might teach us by his word and his example to be *meek and lowly*, and shew us how to regain the divine favour and image, by laying the foundation of his gospel and of our recovery in humility of soul: *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven;* Matt. v. 3. And next to his own Son, God has sent his servant Paul for our pattern, who calls himself, *less than the least of all the saints*, and persuades us *to be followers of him, as he is of Christ.*

I have not drawn out at large here the particular rules and directions for acquiring these lovely virtues of christian humility and meekness, having written so many chapters of advice how to subdue pride and wrath and other vices in my little Treatise of the Passions, and to these I refer my readers under the divine blessing.

Newington,
March 25, 1737.

HUMILITY

REPRESENTED IN THE CHARACTER OF ST. PAUL, &c.

EPHESIANS iii. 8.

LESS THAN THE LEAST OF ALL SAINTS.

INTRODUCTION.

HOW meanly does this great and holy man, this chiefest of the apostles, speak of himself? To how low a degree does he sink himself and his exalted virtues? To how narrow a compass does he reduce all his own natural talents, his acquired excellencies and even his divine qualifications? Less than the least, ἐλαχιστότερος: It is a Greek word made on purpose to signify the exceeding diminutive idea he had of himself, and it is very happily rendered by our English translators?

How different is our common behaviour from that of holy Paul? When we think of self we are ready to raise our thoughts beyond all measure, and aggrandize our ideas to a vast and shameful degree, as though we stood as fair and as large and as high in the eyes of our fellow-worms as we do in our own eyes. Vain imagination! Wretched self-flattery and foolish pride! We take the least of words, the least of syllables, the least of letters, I, and swell and amplify it, if I may so speak, to fill a page, or to spread over a whole leaf, and we scarce leave a scanty margin for all other names to stand in: Nothing less than a volume will contain or display our characters and our due praises. We set so many flourishes round our own names and fill our own eyes with them, that we can see nothing else. All other names lie concealed and disappear, while our own ingrosses our sight and admiration. We make every thing else look so little, as though it were fit only to lie neglected and forgotten, while self, or I, should be alone beheld and alone regarded. But the great apostle, who had more excellencies and real honours than a thousand of us put together, gives his thoughts a different turn; what am I? says he, a little mean worthless thing, to be intrusted with this glorious gospel, and to have such divine favours conferred on me? "I am nothing that is grand and exalted, *but the least of all the saints, and less than the least of them.*" When, O my soul, when wilt thou learn to copy after so illustrious an example, so divine a pattern of humility? But not to paraphrase any longer on this matter here at large, let us enter into particulars.

Perhaps some persons may expect, that I should spend time here to distinguish and determine exactly, what sort of opinion and esteem we ought to have of ourselves. Surely a man of letters and education is not bound to think himself as illiterate as a peasant, nor a youth of ingenuity to fancy himself a fool: A person of figure and quality must not suppose himself in all respects upon a level with the lower ranks of mankind, nor can it be that a man of sense and virtue, of religion and goodness, must know himself to be of superior worth and merit to the rude and the wicked multitude. Do not nature and reason direct us to judge of persons as well as things according to truth? Nor does the best of religions forbid us to pass a true and right judgment concerning ourselves, or concerning our fellow-creatures. Besides, it is proper and necessary that a man should

have, in some measure, a just idea of himself, that he may every where in his conduct and behaviour maintain his own character, and answer the demands of his own station with justice and honour, both in the world and in the church. What is it then we are to understand by this diminishing idea of self, which was so honourable in the great apostle, and which is so worthy of our imitation.

To this enquiry I shall give but a short answer, for I allow all that is here proposed by way of query or objection to be just and true. I grant it is our duty to know ourselves for many valuable purposes both in life and religion, and to form a just sentiment, as near as we can, of our own qualifications, and our place and rank among our fellow-creatures. But as the honourable example of St. Paul directs us, so the design of my present advice lies here, *viz.* that in passing a judgment concerning ourselves, we should always set a strong guard on the side of self-love and flattery: We should watch against the pride of our hearts, which is every moment ready to overrate all appearances of what is valuable in us, and forgets to bring our defects into the balance of the account; pride spies out those excellencies in us which none else can see, while it conceals and lessens our evil qualities so as to reduce them almost to nothing. By this means, the judgment that we form concerning ourselves is for the most part mistaken and criminal. We hearken to the prejudices of our self-love; we view our virtues through a magnifying glass in the sunshine, and cast our vices into shade and concealment. We carry always about us these false representations of ourselves, this vain picture which is so very unlike the original: We speak, and act, and live, according to this bright, and great, and mistaken idea of self, and thereby we plunge ourselves into many errors, iniquities, and mischiefs.

And especially when we happen to *compare ourselves* with others, our envy arises to assist the work, and offers its wretched and dangerous aid to help on the comparison. We soon spy out all their blemishes and imperfections, and lessen their character, in order to exalt our own. Thus, while pride on the one side brightens and aggrandizes our own image, and on the other side envy detracts from the image of our neighbour, sullies his virtues, and darkens his honours, we act our relative parts in the world in a very irregular manner, under the influence of these erroneous sentiments and ideas.

The mean opinion of self, therefore, that by the pattern of the apostle I would recommend to my own heart, and to all my friends, is this, that in taking a just estimate of every thing that relates to ourselves, or to our fellow-creatures, we should keep a strict watch against the dangers of these selfish passions and prejudices; and we should always make large allowances for those false and glaring colours wherewith our vanity paints and adorns our own image, and for those deceitful weights which pride is ever flinging into our own scale, to make our virtues appear solid and weighty; and we should make the same allowances for those dark and disgraceful shades of vice and folly which envy spreads over our neighbours' character, and for those reproaches wherewith she loads the opposite scale, while we are weighing the virtues of our neighbours, in order to make them seem lighter.

The bulk of mankind are so generally given to err on this hand, that is, to overvalue themselves and depreciate their neighbours, and the number of those who make a mistake on the other side is so exceeding small, that in proposing general directions for our conduct, there is scarce any need of a caution or guard against the humble and self-denying kinds of mistake. Then is our opinion concerning ourselves and our neighbours agreeable to the rule and temper of christianity, and generally nearer the truth, when we

sink our idea of self rather below what seems to us to be our due, and when we raise the idea of our neighbours a little above what appears to belong to them, for they doubtless have some virtues and good qualities unknown to us, and it is certain we have some secret failings which do not usually come within our own notice. But I shall touch upon this subject perhaps once again, and therefore I proceed to the general heads of my discourse.

Here I shall enquire first, Whence comes it to pass that St. Paul forms so diminutive an idea of himself, and calls himself less than the least of all the saints? And secondly, What blessed advantages may we obtain by this lessening view of ourselves, in imitation of such an example.

SECTION I.

THE SPRINGS OF ST. PAUL'S HUMILITY.

THE first thing to be enquired is, whence comes it to pass that St. Paul forms such diminutive ideas of himself? I answer,

I. From a constant sense of his own former iniquities, and an ever-present consciousness of sin that dwells in him. You may read this account of himself in many of his epistles, 1 Cor. xv. 9. *I am the least of the apostles, and am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.* 1 Tim. i. 13, 15. *I was before a blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious:* And in this view I am *the chief of sinners.* Rom. vii. 14, 18, 24. *I am carnal, sold under sin. In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: O wretched man that I am?* Each of us are best acquainted with ourselves, and know best what our own former sins and follies have been. Some of us perhaps have been suffered to fall into more criminal actions and shameful iniquities than others; but there is not one of us who has not sinned enough to make him lie humble in the dust, and think meanly of himself, if our former iniquities were always kept in view. But, alas! we are much inclined to forget our sins, to cast them behind our back, to turn our eyes away from them; it is a painful and an uneasy sight; while at the same time we vainly turn our eyes to our own fancied excellencies, and with pleasure we dwell long in the survey of our own real or imagined qualifications and virtues: We aggrandize our little worthless selves into idols, and then we worship the vain image which our pride has made. We pay much incense of self-flattery and praise to the swelling and exalted idea of the little worthless name I or Me; and when we have set up a false god for our own worship, we are fond to have other men bow down and worship it too. Come, my soul, come, let the holy apostle teach thee to secure thyself against the danger and deceit of this foolish pride: Let him instruct thee how to depress and keep down this rising tumour, this fermenting swelling thing, self. Take a frequent survey of thy former sins and follies; look into thy heart; behold the hourly workings of iniquity there; what abatements of thy fancied honour, what defilements and stains and inward shame wilt thou find upon thee? Methinks there is something elegant and exalted in the language of a famous English poet,* while he is humbling the vanity of human nature beneath the brute creatures, and even beneath the things which have neither sense nor life:

* Waller.

"Let the proud peacock his gay feathers spread
And court the female to his painted bed:
Let winds and seas together rage and swell;
This nature teaches, and't becomes them well.
Pride was not made for man. A conscious sense
Of guilt and folly and their consequence
Destroys the claim, and to beholders tells,
Here nothing but the shape of manhood dwells."

As if he should say, "Here is not that glorious thing, that honourable and holy creature man, as he was first made by the hands of God, and stamped with the divine image: Here is nothing but the mere outward shape and figure, shadow and appearance of him, divested of his original dignities, bereft of his inward and superior glories." If such a saint as Paul, of the first degree, could call himself *the chief of sinners, and less than the least of all the saints*, and would frame a new word for it, because there was none ready made in all the copious language of the Greeks, which was sufficiently diminutive to express his humble thoughts of himself, what new lessening names, what unknown words of abasement must we form to give ourselves our own true character, who fall so far beneath this apostle?

II. While the apostle depresses himself so much below his fellow-saints, he not only remembers his own failings, but he seems to look upon others without their blemishes; and this is one way whereby he comes to sink the idea of his own character in comparison of theirs. His goodness and his love cover all their follies, and keep them, as it were, out of sight, while he compares himself with them: "Charity *covers a multitude of sins*." He practises that great duty in his epistle to the Ephesians, when he calls himself *less than the least of the saints*, which he recommends in his letter to the christians at Rome, Rom. xii. 10. *Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another.* Oh! when shall we arrive at this spirit, and learn this holy lesson of love? When shall we think of our fellow-christians, and leave their faults out of our ideas of them? How ready are we to spy out their blemishes, and fix our eye first upon their little spots and the abatements of their virtue? And then we exalt ourselves, while we forget our own failings, and imagine that we are higher and better than all around us. Dost thou not know, O my soul, more of the vices of thy nature, and of the sins of thy life, than thou knowest of any of thy fellow-christians? Why then should thy vanity tempt thee to think so much better of thyself than thou dost of them? One would think thy own guilt and follies, which are so well known to thee, should do more to abase thee in thy own eyes, than all thy suspicions of the folly and guilt of thy neighbours should do, to sink their character in thy esteem. Remember this, that for the most part it is but a rumour and suspicion of the sins of thy brethren that lessens thy esteem of them; but thou hast an inward consciousness and assurance of thy own frailties and thy own vileness, which might more powerfully abase thy pride, and teach thee to cry out with the apostle, *less than the least of all the saints.*

III. I might add, in the third place, another spring of his humility was an abiding sense of the infinite greatness and holiness of God, and the unsearchable excellencies and glories of his Son Jesus. This is a sight which stains the glory of all flesh, and brings the haughtiness of man down to the dust. This I confess does not so directly tend to this comparative humility, this abasing himself below his fellows, but it has a mighty influence on this virtue absolutely considered, and therefore I name it. The apostle maintains upon

his spirit grand ideas of the great God, *the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach, whom no man hath seen nor can see, to whom belongs honour and power everlasting;* 1 Tim. vi. 15, 16. What an atom, what a dust of being, what a dark and diminutive thing is man, under the lively apprehension of a present God, a God of such majesty and brightness? And in the words following my text he is surveying the grandeurs of *Christ, by whom God created all things,* and *the unsearchable riches of his grace;* Eph. iii. 8, 9. And how mean and little must every son of Adam appear in the presence of this Son of God? He looks upon himself as poor and contemptible in the view of such unsearchable riches and glory. A sinful and fallen man, who has been favoured with some attainments above his neighbours, when he stands in the midst of sinful and fallen men, may perhaps appear something great and honourable; but when he sets himself before a holy God, and before Christ the Son of his love, and the *express image of his* glories, he must then think himself despicably little, and covered with meannesses and dishonours. So a worm or an emmet that is a little larger than his brethren may lift up itself among fellow-emmets or fellow-worms; but the foot of a man treads it to the dust, and it appears a worthless and unregarded thing.

O my soul, if thou wouldst lessen thyself as a creature and a christian ought to do, live much in the sight of God *as seeing him that is invisible.* When God appears in the glory of his holiness, God in the person of his Son Jesus in his pre-existent state, as St. John tells us in chapter xii. then the seraphs cover their faces and their feet with their wings in his presence, and the holy prophet cries out, *Woe is me, for I am undone; I am a man of unclean lips; mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts;* Isaiah vi. 2, 5. *Once have I spoken* of myself, saith Job, to maintain my own honours, *yea twice,* before I had seen God in his glory; *but now mine eye has seen thee, behold I am vile, I will lay my hand upon my mouth,* I lie down in profound silence, *I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes;* Job xl. 4, 5. and xlii. 5, 6. Live much therefore, O my soul, in the views of God, the fairest, and the first, and the best of beings: Live much in the contemplation of Christ his Son, *in whom dwells all the fulness of the godhead bodily,* and who is the first and fairest image of the Father. Thou canst never dare to swell and exalt thyself, thy little worthless self, in the presence of such majesty, in the eye of such adorable and divine excellencies.

The last thing I shall mention, as a spring of St. Paul's humility, was his frequent view and meditation of the condescension, the lowliness, the meekness, and self-abasement of the blessed Jesus. As he charges the Philippian converts, that *the same mind* and temper should *be in them which was in Christ Jesus;* Phil. ii. 5. so, by a continual contemplation of him in his humbled estate, he learned to imitate so divine an example, and he recommends his own conduct as a pattern for men no farther than as he followed Christ. But this subject will fall in often by the way, while I am representing the grace of humility in its lovely appearances, and therefore I dismiss it now.

SECTION II.

THE ADVANTAGES OF HUMILITY IN REGARD OF GOD.

It is time to proceed to the second general head of discourse, *viz.* what advantages are to be derived from an imitation of this apostle, this great example of humility, what unknown profit will arise from this holy diminution or lessening of self? Surely many and various will be the benefits of such a pious practice: Some with regard to God, some with regard to our neighbours, and others with regard to ourselves. The first set of advantages that we shall derive from this practice of humility, are such as regard God and religion, and they may be thrown into the following particulars:

I. We shall be kept ever dependent on Divine providence and grace for every thing, while we are deeply sensible of our own emptiness, and we lie more directly under the promises of divine supplies. While we feel that in and of ourselves we are nothing, we shall be continually waiting upon God for every blessing to be conveyed to us according to our wants: *We shall never think ourselves sufficient* for any work, duty, or difficulty without him, and we shall live upon him hourly for light and strength, for grace and comfort. *We are not sufficient of ourselves*, says the apostle, *to think one thought as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God;* 2 Cor. iii. 5. Humility and dependence go together: Those who have high thoughts of themselves are not so naturally inclined nor easily persuaded to trust in another. Psalm x. 4. *The wicked through the pride of his heart will not seek after God.* But David, as a type of Christ in his state of infirmity and flesh, cries out, *I am a worm and no man;* Psalm xxii. 6. And therefore his heart is ever trusting in the Lord: So St. Paul ever keeps his hold of the grace of God, and depends on the strength of Christ, under a constant and prevailing sense of his own weakness. 2 Cor. xii. 10. *When I am weak then am I strong:* When I feel my own weakness, I am strong by a dependence on the grace of Christ. A weak christian and an almighty Saviour are a sufficient match for the most formidable enemy: *My grace*, O Paul, *is sufficient for thee* against the thorns of the flesh, and the buffets of Satan.

The rich gospel of grace was only made for the poor and the humble among the sons and daughters of Adam. For whom is all that fulness of righteousness and fulness of grace treasured up in Christ Jesus, but for those who are deeply abased under a sense of their own guilt and sinfulness? It is for those who are dying and despairing in themselves that Jesus has brought in hope and life. We can never be christians till we are thus humbled and brought to the foot of God to receive all from his Son.

Remember, O my soul, it is this self-poverty, this emptiness and dependence, makes thee a prepared vessel for the largest communications of divine influence and blessing. Jesus, the Son of God, came down from heaven furnished with all fulness of heavenly graces, to bestow only upon the poor and needy and the depending creature. He was sent to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, *to heal the sick, to give sight to the blind*, to bestow wisdom upon the ignorant, *to preach the gospel to the poor*, and to *call sinners to repentance* and salvation; but the self-righteous, and the wise, and the exalted haughty things of this world, he hath no blessings for them, for they are all full of themselves, they do not feel nor imagine that they have any need of his bounty. The doctrines and benefits of his gospel are *hid from the wise*, and the mighty, and the sons of pride; but

they are *revealed to babes*, and conferred on the poor. The humble soul dwells nearest to the rich treasures of grace, and the empty vessel is best prepared to receive the largest communications. What is it then, O my heart, that should tempt thee to maintain high thoughts of thyself, of thy own understanding, of thy own sufficiency, when it is the ready way to exclude thee from all the aids of divine grace? *He hath filled the hungry with good things, but the rich he hath sent empty away;* Luke i. 53. *God resisteth the proud, but giveth* more *grace unto the humble;* James iv. 6.

II. When we have low thoughts of ourselves, our hearts and lips will be full of acknowledgments for the daily favours of grace and providence. We shall take notice of every favourable dispensation that attends us, every support and relief of divine mercy which is communicated to us, and shall ascribe all to the free and rich grace of God. Learn this language, O my soul, I was sinking and drowning, and God *set my feet upon a rock, and established all my goings:* I was wandering in foolish and pernicious ways, running down to destruction and death, but the blessed God sent his Son from heaven *to seek and save* me, and by the voice of his gospel, and the secret whispers of his Spirit, he has directed my feet into the paths of holiness and peace and life eternal: I was sick and God healed me: I was in trouble and the Lord relieved me: I was in darkness and he shed light upon my path: I was in straits and his hand extricated me out of them: I was on the very borders of death, and on the verge of hell, helpless and hopeless in myself, but, glory be to his holy name, he has given me help, and hope, and salvation.

Such is the language of the blessed Paul, 1 *Cor.* xv. 10, 11. I am nothing in myself, and if I appear to be any thing, it is *by the grace of God I am what I am:* Holy David, in his devotions, is full of the same humble acknowledgments: *I was poor and needy,* but thou hast been my helper and my strength; I was surrounded with enemies, thou hast been my salvation: This is the sense of many of his divine songs. And *who am I, or what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?* 1 Sam. vii. 18.

On the other hand, the man who is full of self is ready to assume all the honour of his success and his peaceful circumstances to his own reason, to his own wisdom, to the diligence and strength of his own right hand, or at least to his own merit of these favours from heaven. He gives himself the praise of the blessings that surround him: And if his table is spread plentifully from the earth, or from the waters, he ascribes that plenty to his own skill, *he sacrifices to his own net, and burns incense to his own drag,* as the prophet expresses it in a noble metaphor, *Hab.* i. 16. And thus the God of heaven is robbed of his honours, and the praise is given to a creature which is due to the Creator only: Thus the proud man multiplies his iniquities, and commits sacrilege and idolatry at once.

III. Another advantage of these humbling thoughts of ourselves is this, that we shall bear with more patience the afflicting hand of God upon us, and wait longer for the moment of deliverance without murmuring. These self-abasing sentiments under heavy sorrows will incline us to confess, "Lord, I have deserved them all," and will teach us to speak the language of the prophet Micah, chapter vii. verse 9. *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, till he arise and plead my cause.* When, O my soul, wilt thou learn this holy behaviour? When wilt thou learn this humble language? If the Lord bestow no temporal blessings upon me, I lie at his foot; he is not my debtor, I deserve no blessing from his hands: If he take away part of my substance and my wealth, I have deserved to be deprived of it all for my unprofitableness, for my earthly mind, for my vanity and the pride of my heart. If I have *food and raiment,* I will *there-*

with be content; it is much more than I have deserved. If I am sick and in pain, I would remember that I am guilty, and *he punishes less than my iniquities deserve.* If I am stripped naked of my earthly comforts, I resign them to his disposal, I can claim none of them as my merit, or as my property; *the Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away, and blessed be the name of the Lord:* He has done no more than he has right to do with a worthless worm, and I lie in the dust before him waiting his good pleasure. Such a temper of mind carries peace and serenity in it, not without some glimpses of pious hope and humble expectation. I will *lay my mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope* in the grace of God, which loves to triumph over the unworthiness of creatures.

But let us now turn the tables, and view the different temper and conduct of the man who has high thoughts of himself. When he is under the afflicting stroke of heaven, he imagines he has deserved some better treatment at the hand of God; and though he dares not say this to his Maker's face, yet the inward vexation and rage, the disquietude and resentment of his heart under afflictions, is such as would vent itself in loud murmurs and reproaches against heaven if it durst: And because he dares not suffer his passion and fury to rise thus against his Creator, he gives it a vent, and lets loose his impatience against every creature that comes in his way: Hence arises the impious fretfulness, and the tormenting vexation of spirit that haughty persons feel under pressing calamities; they throw their fury all around them: Their impatience under the hand of God is expressed by peevishness toward men: They make every one that is near them a witness of that inward indignation and resentment which they dare not directly aim at him that dwells on high. It is this rising vanity, this fermenting and swelling idea of self that gives us tenfold agony and smart, when we are cast down and pressed under the hand of God. When we sustain evils which we cannot remedy, we multiply and increase their load, and sharpen every sting of calamity by the pride and impatience of our own spirits. God is affronted by us, men grow weary of helping us, we enhance the pain and anguish of every affliction, and we provoke the hand of a holy and jealous God to keep us longer under the weight of sorrow, sickness, or distress, till it has done his work, and pressed down the haughtiness of our spirit.

IV. By diminishing thoughts of ourselves, we shall attain a nearer and greater conformity to the blessed Jesus, the Son of God. What is there in all the character of our dear Redeemer greater and more surprising than his humble temper and his humbled estate? The merit and honour of his humility and lowliness are aggrandized and brightened by every glorious and divine idea that enters into his character. *He is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person,* yet *he humbled himself* to the form of a man, and to *the likeness of sinful flesh:* He is the Son of God, and one with the Father, yet he became the son of man, and was born of a poor virgin of the despicable country of Galilee; and when he was a man here upon earth, how did his meek and gentle and condescending behaviour manifest his self-abasing virtues? He emptied himself of the splendours which he once possessed, *Phil.* ii. 6, 7. *He made himself of no reputation,* as the English translators have rendered it, *and being found in fashion as a man,* he behaved like a fellow-creature, a friend and a brother, though he was really superior to angels, and one with God, though his name was *God with us,* and his character was *God manifest in the flesh.* See what sort of inference the apostle makes from such a view of our blessed Lord? verses 3, 4, 5. *Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves. Look*

not every man on his own things, that is, with a self-flattering and exalted survey of them, *but let every man also look on the things of others*, paying all due regard to their real worth and dignity. *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.* Indeed there is no possibility of lessening ourselves comparably to the self-abasement of the Son of God; and yet the nearer we are like him, the more shall we partake of the Father's love, and we shall be in the way of divine advancement, in an humble imitation of the advancement of Christ himself: Because *he humbled himself to death, therefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name;* Phil. ii. 9.

V. By an humble opinion of ourselves, and by a lowly conduct and behaviour in life, we shall bring honour to the gospel, and become the truest ornaments to the divine religion which we profess. Never was any religion founded in so much humility as that of the gospel: The first principle of it requires that we be sensible of our own guilt and sinfulness, our danger and misery, and our utter insufficiency to relieve ourselves: And in the progress it shews us to derive all the good we have and hope for from the free mercy of God through a Mediator. The first line of that excellent sermon which Jesus, the author of the gospel, preached to his people upon the mountain is this, *blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven;* Matt. v. 3. Blessed are those who have the lowest and meanest thoughts of themselves, for the heavenly treasures of divine grace are particularly offered to them, and they are most ready to receive them. It is the very design of the gospel to stain the glory of all flesh, and to hide pride from man, to teach man that he is nothing, and that he has nothing in and of himself, *that he that glorieth may glory in the Lord;* 1 Cor. i. 19, 31. Now the man that keeps these self-abasing virtues, and maintains an humbling sense of his own nothingness in himself, and his universal dependence upon the grace of Christ, does acceptable honour to the gospel which he professes, and makes it appear in its own proper and divine light.

SECTION III.

THE ADVANTAGES OF HUMILITY IN REGARD OF MEN.

As humility towards God is a necessary qualification of every christian, so humble thoughts of ourselves, in regard of our fellow-creatures, belong to the profession and character of this gospel: For what have I to boast of above my brother, when we are all under the sentence of common condemnation before God, all guilty and miserable in his sight, and are all entirely indebted to his free and rich mercy for every degree of excellency or advantage that we possess? *What hast thou*, O my soul, *that thou hast not received? Why dost thou then glory* and look big upon thy fellows, *as though thou hast not received it? Who is it that hast made thee differ from another?* 1 Cor. iv. 7.

Oh! what a dishonour does it bring upon the gospel of Christ, when one, who takes upon him the christian name, exalts himself into conceit and vanity, and swells in his own opinion of himself, when he sets himself on high above his brethren, and looks down upon them with haughtiness and scorn? Can such a wretch be a christian, while he is a reproach to the christian name, and has not the first principle of christianity, has nothing of the temper or spirit of the gospel in him? But some of these thoughts lead me to the second rank of advantages which may be derived from low and humble thoughts of our-

selves, and these are such as regard our neighbours or fellow-creatures. And the first of them is this.

I. If we have a mean opinion of self, we shall pay due esteem and honour to every thing that is valuable in other men, and not scorn and despise every body around us, as though they were not worthy to be named the same day with ourselves: Nor shall we be so imperious and haughty in our behaviour, even where God has given some degrees of superiority. Perhaps we plume ourselves with the honours of our ancestors, and look down with disdain upon those whose family is of a lower rank than ours. But a grain of wisdom will put us in mind that the honours of birth are no certain evidences of virtue or merit: There may be some high-born animals with sorry and scoundrel souls, and some who drew their first breath in a cottage, strangers to title and quality, whose eminences are bright and shining. Add a grain of humility, and it will teach us that all families were one in Adam, the first man, when our blood ran in his veins: We are all made of one common earth; we are but the same coarse materials, the same clay, moulded up into the form of man; let this dwell upon the heart, and we shall not carry it so disdainfully to our kindred-clods, nor look down with such scorn upon any of our earthly brethren, our fellow-worms, because of those accidental advantages of which we imagine ourselves possessed.

Or perhaps we fall into company that are unpolished and unbred, they carry rustic airs about them, while we have got a few forms of behaviour, and we publish our scorn of them to shew our breeding. Foolish insolence and preposterous vanity, which the well-bred and polite are never guilty of! But tell me, man, how long hast thou learned thy genteel and elegant behaviour, these arts and forms of boasted decency? Can thou not remember the time when thy gait and thy mien, thy speech and all thy airs, were almost as aukward and uncouth as the very creature thou deridest? And wouldst thou have been willing to have had thy former aukwardnesses made the ridicule of the company? Couldst thou so well bear to have been the jest of the man above thee, that thou spendest thy jests so freely upon one in low life, who is the very figure of what thou hast been? Hast thou not humility, nor prudence, nor goodness enough to remember this?

Or perhaps thou art dressed finer, and art a favourite among the great: But is this sufficient reason to scorn the poor? Remember also that he is thy brother by nature: Naked and cast out of the favour of God together with thee: All sons and daughters of Adam the great sinner, all *by nature children of wrath*, strangers to the blessed God, outcasts of paradise, and averse to all that is holy: And if we behold ourselves in this state, what is there in one little lump of this wretched and polluted mass of human nature, that it should exalt itself upon any little pretences over the rest of the mass, wherein it lay in common pollution and wretchedness? Or if we hope that we are called and sanctified, and become the children of God, who was it made the difference? Was it not the free mercy of God that called us and wrought the divine change in us? What is there for us to boast of? Let us allow those who we think are yet uncalled and unchanged by grace all the natural excellencies and moral qualifications that belong to them, and not sully and darken the evidences of our own christianity by a haughty and scornful carriage toward our neighbours.

Let us remember yet farther, that many others are called and renewed and sanctified as well as we, and perhaps have brighter evidences of their graces, and bear up the character of the children of God with more honour than we do: And we should think so too

if our pride and conceit would but suffer us to see their shining virtues, their exalted piety. If we could but maintain such thoughts as these, we should not assume such haughty airs, such insolence of language over our fellow-worms, that are crept out of the same bed of meanness and defilement, and some of them perhaps have a larger share of purifying grace than ourselves. Or had I but a due degree of self-abasement, how swift and ready should I be to spy out the virtues which my neighbour possesses, and to pay due honour to all his valuable qualifications; even as the proud, the envious, and the malicious spirits are ready to spy out the blemishes of their fellows, and to expose them.

It is the voice of the humble man concerning his poor neighbour, "Though he may not have so much of this world as God has given to me, yet perhaps he has a larger and fairer interest in the inheritance on high: He may not have such a large acquaintance with human sciences, because he has not had the advantages which I have enjoyed, but perhaps he is richer in grace, and has laid up a better treasure against a day to come. It may be he is not so much acquainted with courts and palaces, he has little to do with chariots and horses and rich equipage, but perhaps he is more acquainted with God, oftener at the gates of heaven, and nearer akin to *the spirits made perfect*, to the saints and angels on high." Thus he prefers his neighbour in the honours of the invisible world, while in all things visible he is much superior to him: Thus he fulfils the advice of St. Paul to the Philippians, chapter ii. verse 3. and *in lowliness of mind esteems others better than himself.*

Such a happy spirit as this reigning within us will utterly forbid us to fall in with a word of scandal when it is going current round the room; a wretched but a common crime! Humble souls ever carry about them such a constant sense of their own defects and follies, that they dare not help onward the flying reproach. They find so many errors in their own lives, that they cannot dwell with delight on the blemishes of their fellow-mortals. An inward consciousness and shame blushes in their bosoms, and imposes silence upon their lips: Or perhaps compassion awakens them to make some apology for the absent sufferer, or to strike the scandal dead with a word of just reproof. If we have a low opinion of ourselves, our eyes will never acquire the disdainful cast, nor learn the scornful airs of those who are full of self. Our lips will never assume the haughty tone and the insolent language of the proud in heart. "Speak not," say they to their inferior friends, "we do not want your prattle while I am here: Answer not when I give my opinion: Do what I require, be silent and dumb: Do you not know who it is speaks to you?" At another time they will forbid you their company: "Go out of my sight, avoid my presence, it is not fit I should be seen in your company, you have neither dress nor manners fit to appear." So the haughty hypocrites in the days of Isaiah the prophet, *Stand by thyself, for I am holier* and better *than thou;* Isaiah lxv. 5. So the proud mortals of every age publish and pronounce their scorn of those whom Providence has placed but a little below them.

Such sort of language, indeed, should scarce ever be used by masters to their own menial servants, but where the servant is very assuming, or intolerably impertinent: But for persons to treat lower friends or acquaintance at this rate, gives too evident a signal of a proud spirit. Where the eyes and the lips have learned these disdainful and imperious airs, it is exceeding hard to unlearn them. A peacock may almost as soon be untaught to spread his gay feathers, or the seas and the winds untaught to swell and roar,

as a man full of self to put off his insolence, to stand upon a level with his fellows, and to treat those about him with affability and candour, who are in any respect inferior to him.

Watch, O my soul, against the first secret motions of vanity: when thy inward thoughts begin to swell and thy heart to exalt itself, watch against every haughty air, against the high look and the scornful tone; watch and subdue the earliest workings of pride; for if they gain but a little indulgence and strength, all the powers of thy reason will not be able to subdue them, and they will create thee long and heavy toil to gain the victory after many sore vexations of spirit, nor wilt thou ever become an humble creature without the abundant aids of divine grace.

II. If we have low thoughts of ourselves we shall be thankful for every design of kindness which our neighbours express towards us, nor shall we scorn the good offices of the meanest, though perhaps we can receive little or no advantage by them. God the glorious and the sublime, *who inhabits eternity* and dwells above the praises of his highest angels, looks down upon the heart of every humble worshipper here on earth, and receives our little worthless services with a smile of approbation; *If there be a willing mind* the gift *is accepted according to what* the giver is able to offer; 2 *Cor.* viii. 12. nor are the two mites of a widow neglected or disdained in the treasury of our God; *Luke* xxi. 2. Remember, O my heart, the divine example, and be an imitator of the blessed God in this respect, who made thee to wear his own image. But mark how the haughty man who is full of self receives the offers of kindness from his inferior. He scarce vouchsafes to cast an eye upon them, unless it be in scorn: Thus he upbraids his neighbour with his poverty: He treats his humble civilities with contempt, and despises all his good will: Merit and modesty blush and sink down before him, and die under his frowns. O vile idea of a haughty scorner, who puts modesty to the blush and lets merit die.

III. The humble man who has low thoughts of himself is beloved of men as well as of God, and gains the favour of all around him. He remembers that it is *of one blood God has made all nations*, and he is moulded of the same dust with his fellows, and he thinks rather of those essentials of human nature wherein he lies upon a level with the meanest son of Adam, than of those accidental differences of wit or wealth which have raised him above some of his fellows. He knows that others have a right to some degrees of love and esteem as well as himself, they have some pretence to understanding and merit as well as he.

If the poor and the ignorant ask him a question, though it be an impertinent one, he does not turn short upon them with a smart and surly speech, nor turn away with a disdainful silence: He makes the child and the servant love him by the soft and friendly answer he gives even to their needless queries. His behaviour to his inferiors has something in it so engaging, that there is not the meanest figure of mankind goes from his presence without a pleasing image of his goodness left upon their minds. When he comes into company with his equals, he does not seize the dictator's chair, nor affect to shew himself in any superior forms. He comes to learn rather than to instruct, and not only gives others leave to speak in their turn, but he hears their opinion with patience and pleasure, and pays due deference to all the appearances of reason in their discourse, though he may sometimes happen to prefer his own sentiment. He is not fond of ingrossing the talk to himself, nor of filling up the hour of conversation with hearing his own discourse, or speaking his own praises: He limits the motions of his tongue, he pays

to every one the rights of society, and he enjoys the esteem and love of all. Humility carries in it all the sincere arts of complaisance, and is the shortest way to form and accomplish the man of breeding.

But a swelling haughty creature is a hateful thing. Insolence of heart and tongue are forbidding qualities. *A proud look is an abomination to the Lord*, and an abhorred thing amongst men; *Prov.* xvii. 6. Such persons may be feared but they are never loved: They may have many cringes and compliments paid to them by their neighbours, but they have no room in their esteem, no place in their heart; *Prov.* xxiv. 9. *A scorner is an abomination to men:* He that takes this road to grandeur widely mistakes his way, for he often ruins his interest instead of advancing it. And if he should happen to arrive at greatness, he leaves behind him the more virtuous and tasteful pleasures of friendship and love: If he could but hear with what contempt and hatred he is treated behind his back, he would endure much anguish of soul with inward shame and lasting vexation: And it is pity but he should hear it sometimes, to punish at least, if not to cure his insolence.

Has Divine Providence raised me to any accidental degrees of elevation above my neighbours, let my heart seek their love rather than their fear: Let me find proper seasons to place myself as it were upon a level with them with all due and condescending decency, and thus let me seek and obtain the esteem and hearty benevolence of mankind, and particularly of those whom Providence has placed beneath me. There is an art of bearing up one's highest character and dignity amongst men without the haughty airs, the exalted eyebrow, and the insolent tone of voice.

IV. Low and humble thoughts of ourselves will teach us to bear the admonition of our friends with a gentler temper, and receive the blessing with a return of thankfulness: We shall sustain the reproaches of our enemies also with a greater calm of soul, and stand the rudest shock of calumny with a more steady patience.

What is it but the pride of our hearts, and the great and sacred image which we frame of ourselves, that makes us so hasty to resent the softest admonition of a friend? Our hearts and lips stand always ready pressed to vindicate our whole conduct, and sometimes we let loose our fire and thunder on a sudden upon those who give us the most friendly rebuke. Self is our shining idol, and no man must dare to suppose there is any blemish or spot upon it. Therefore we repay the kindest advice with railing, and revile men for the greatest benefit they can bestow upon us. We form so innocent and so venerable an idea of ourselves, we fancy our beloved selves to be wise, so unblameable and perfect, that we cannot endure to hear or suspect there are any failings belonging to us, and we resent it as a high offence when they are pointed out to us by the gentlest hand. We are jealous of every thing that opposes our opinion, that censures our conduct, or in the most friendly language discovers our mistakes: Passion and resentment are ever upon the watch and stand ready to take the alarm; the eyes and the tongue are swift to discover the inward ferment, to publish and betray the pride of the heart. O that each of us would but honestly enquire, "Is this my picture? Are these the features of my soul? Do I ever wear this aspect, or assume these airs?" But alas, which of us, O my friends, is entirely innocent and blameless here? How few follies had any of us carried into aged life, if we had not had too much pride and self-flattery to invite and encourage the admonitions of our acquaintance, who saw these budding fooleries in younger years? But we were too rich, or too wise, or too vain to bear a reprover; and

thus our vices are grown up with us to shame our grey hairs, and are now too much mingled with our natures ever to be rooted out.

While we maintain this temper of mind, it is no wonder we cannot bear the ruder reproaches of the world, nor confine ourselves in that dangerous moment within any bounds of sobriety or patience. We kindle on a sudden into undue rage, we swell and burn with inward indignation and indulge our lips in a wild revenge: Or sometimes perhaps the pride of our souls, mingled with a particular constitution of body, sinks under the assaults of scandal, with a shameful cowardice, and almost dies with abjectness of spirit; for courage is not always an attendant upon pride: The vain man is not always a hero.

O unhappy creature, that is thus galled inwardly with every stroke of the tongues of men! That vexes and frets its own peace away for want of due honours from the world! All the comforts and blessings of life are insipid or disrelishing, all the grandeur of circumstances, the sunshine of heaven, and the gaiety of the seasons, have no power to relieve or support us. The soul of Haman amidst all his honours of state and his endless treasures, is still pining away with inward vexation, and his life languishes from day to day, because Mordecai does not rise up to him and pay his compliments.

Have a care, O my soul, of copying after this wretched character: Have a care of swelling to these painful dimensions of pride, lest thou render all the comforts of life tasteless for want of some little punctilio of honour which the world will not pay thee. Look upon thyself as a weak mortal, as a creature capable of mistake and folly; this thought will keep the avenues of thy soul ever free and open for the counsels and warnings of thy friends, and make a kind and faithful admonition as welcome as a word of vain applause. And even when enemies reproach thee, thou wilt be suspicious of thyself whether thou hast not deserved the reproach: Thou wilt make a fresh scrutiny into thy own heart, and enquire there in secret, what real truth may be mingled with the unjust revilings of men: And thus thou wilt be powerfully awakened to subdue every vice, to abandon every folly that tarnishes thy character, and make use of the rough language of a malicious world to burnish thy virtues and to keep them ever shining.

V. The lower esteem we have of ourselves, the more easily shall we be pleased with persons and things round about us: We shall be more unmoved at the little accidents of life which may happen to cross our humour, and we shall rather pity than terrify those who chance to displease us where the will was not in it. What is it that fires our resentment at every little mistake or supposed mistake of those that attend on us? What is it rouzes our angry passions at every real or fancied miscarriage of those with whom we converse? What is the spring of all this tumult of soul, this inward disturbance, but the vain and exalted idea which we have conceived of ourselves? As though we must be exempted from the common laws and incidents of our frail and mortal state? Let us colour over our guilt with the kindest salvos yet it is a certain truth, pride and passion are near a-kin, and they are most times joined together in the temper of men and in the conduct of life: Passion and pride are thus united in the descriptions of sin and in the rules of duty, both in the books of morality and in the language of scripture; *Prov.* xxi. 24. *Proud and haughty scorner is his name, who dealeth in proud wrath;* Prov. xiii. 10. *Only by pride cometh contention.* Indulge the one and you support the other: Subdue the one and the other is in a great measure prevented or suppressed. Indeed a man will much sooner confess his passion than his pride: You will hear him sometimes acknow-

ledging to his friend, "It is the frailty of my nature, this cursed passion! I am of a warm and hasty temper: May God and man forgive me!" But you scarce ever hear him say, "This pride is my folly, this pride is my secret iniquity." Yet I was once acquainted with a christian of a hasty and passionate temper, who has many years since left his frailties in the grave, and he would confess with freedom and with a becoming sense of his sin, that there was no passion without some degrees of pride.

VI. If we maintain a mean opinion of ourselves we shall be much more ready to practise benevolence in a disinterested manner, and to deny ourselves for the conveniency of those about us: We shall not be ever projecting to exalt and gratify self, nor shall we think it so hard or painful a thing to be put out of our own way and our course a little, and abate of our own convenience in some instances in order to give some greater conveniency to our friends. Self-denial is one of the first lessons in the school of Christ. Matt. xvi. 34. *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself:* We must learn to mortify our own humour if we would be approved of Christ or beloved of men.

The proud and haughty man is generally so selfish that he can never *love his neighbour* as he ought to love him, because his opinion of self rises so high as to deserve and engross all his kind affections. Let him make what pretences he will to friendship and goodness; let him labour in works of beneficence, and feed the hungry and clothe the naked, yet in all his schemes, contrivances and labours, he has still some secret design for his beloved self: As his imagination swells with this dear idea, so his wishes and projects are ever full of it, even when he would fain appear to practise a disinterested zeal for the good of others. If self and what belongs to self is well, all is well: If self and family be rich and happy, all is right; the man is tolerably easy: But if any thing cross his purposes and the wishes and humours of his heart, nothing is right, nothing is well: His complaints shall be heard aloud and the man can find no rest.

Oh! if we could but keep this dear self from reigning, we should not be so narrow spirited, and begin and end our projects in the little circle of self: We should not fret and storm at every thing that interrupts our pleasures or that interferes with our present designs: We should not rise in fury nor be lavish of our loud reproaches against every thing that disturbs our ease or our indolence. We shall not then think ourselves worthy of such honour and reverence, as though every thing about us must be made to submit to our purposes, and yield to our humours. We shall be content to permit others to have some inclinations, some desires, some conveniences, as well as ourselves: and not imagine that the world was made only for our pleasure, nor even the inferior parts of it merely to obey us. It is only the good and the humble man who tastes satisfaction in the welfare of his inferiors, who relishes the pleasures of his fellow-creatures; and he feels a real and sincere delight to see every one around him made cheerful and easy, though sometimes it may be at the expence of his own ease and convenience. These are joys which pride has never tasted. The man of haughty thoughts and airs has very little acquaintance with the golden rule of equity that our Saviour has given us, *to deal with others as we desire them to deal with us.* He scarce ever concerns himself to reflect how tenderly he would wish to be treated, if he were in the place of those whom he treats so rudely. His pride will not suffer him so much as to suppose himself there. He does not ask himself, "How would this disdain, this overbearing insolence, this disturbance and disappointment sit upon my heart, if my neighbour treated me in this manner?" Surely no mortal would resent it more painfully than himself; and yet he is utterly regardless what

pain he gives to his fellow-creatures by this his scornful behaviour. He may call himself a christian, but I know not who will believe him, while he makes it appear to all men that he has nothing to do with that divine rule of love, which our blessed Saviour borrowed from Moses and gave it to all his followers: *Love thy neighbour as thyself.*

When I feel myself impatient of the least disappointment, when I take no thought to make my neighbour easy, but grow furiously zealous to maintain my own humour at the expence of the ease or the conveniency of all about me, how unlike am I to the blessed Jesus, who had a nobler self than any mere creature; and yet he denied it, even in the tenderest instances of reputation and of life itself for the good of his people? *Rom.* xv. 3. Whence St. Paul derives this holy inference, verse 1, 2. *We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please ourselves: But let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification: For even Christ pleased not himself.* And the blessed apostle has added his own character to confirm and enforce this practice of virtue and goodness; 1 *Cor.* ix. 19—23. *I have made myself a servant to all that I might gain the more: To the weak I became as weak* that I might win their souls: *I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some;* and this I do, that I may be partaker of the blessings of the gospel together with you. O happy souls, in whom this humble and holy temper prevails! Happy souls indeed, who are so dear to God, so much a-kin to Christ, and so zealous of the peace and happiness of men!

SECTION IV.

THE ADVANTAGES OF HUMILITY WITH REGARD TO OURSELVES.

Thus I have finished the second rank of advantages derived from a low esteem of ourselves, *viz.* Those which relate to our fellow-creatures. I come now to consider in the last place, What are the advantages of this virtue with regard to ourselves, to our own improvement and happiness.

I. We shall not be so positive and rooted in all our own opinions, nor so incapable of discerning or rectifying our mistakes. It is of considerable importance to a fallible creature to know that he is liable to a mistake as well as his fellows, that he may search out and correct his errors: But the man who is full of self is never mistaken: He has no opinion to be dropped or altered, no retraction to make: Rash as he is, yet he has no errors to be corrected in his own esteem, and therefore he lives and dies in full possession of many falsehoods, and in the daily practice of many follies. Pride is one vice, but it supports a hundred. What is it but the overweening conceit of our being wiser and better than others that renders us constantly so tenacious of all our opinions, and deaf to all further enquiries and reasonings? What is it makes us set up for dictators to the world with so much frontless assurance, and fix our own sentiments as a test and standard of truth? All the learned sciences and the affairs of common life, trade and politics, mechanic arts, poesy and morals, are the daily subjects of these infallible declaimers, both at the table, and the coffee-house, and in private visits, and yet more eminently at the tavern: There indeed the wine brightens every idea into truth, it raises the courage and the voice together, and establishes every man triumphant in his own opinion. The vain creature knows all things. But one would think that the sacred and sublime topics of religion should be treated with a more doubtful and ingenuous modesty; especially

where the holy writers themselves are not very express and positive in their determinations. One would think there should be some abatements to our confidence, and that we might sometimes speak with a holy fear and suspicion of our understandings in points of the most abstruse and divine argument, where wise and good men have often been divided. Alas for our pride and folly! For our wretched ignorance and our shameful conceit! Let Mr. Baxter, who was a man of great sagacity and a wise observer of human nature, set it before us in this admirable tetrastic, wherein the verses are superior to many of their neighbours.

> "We crowd about a little spark,
> Learnedly striving in the dark,
> Never more bold than when most blind,
> And we run fastest when the truth's behind."

But we are generally too wise to tread one step back again, though it be to lay hold on the truth which we have outrun in our haste to assurance. We have sometimes found it in ourselves and observed it in others, that the firmness of a pretended orthodoxy has not been always derived from light and evidence: Want of humility in the heart is too often the reason why we have no want of confidence in our opinions, whether they be true or false. The boldest and most peremptory assertions are no criterions of truth: Nor are they always the result of a sincere and unbiassed examination, but the fruit of our own conceit and of the high esteem of our own understandings: We are sure we have been in the right even from our early years, or at least from the day of manhood, and we desire to be no wiser, nor can any man make us so.

It is granted there may be some subjects that we have searched to the bottom, we have seen them through and through; and by much labour and argument we are able to pronounce upon them with just assurance. This may be allowed sometimes even to a wise and a modest speaker: But what is it, my friends, that emboldens the bulk of mankind, to talk with such a decisive air upon all manner of themes as they do, when they have read or studied almost nothing of the matter? Hast thou found out, O man, every truth in the heights and the depths, and known every secret thing so well as to be incapable of mistaking? What inspires thee to dictate as though thou only wert the man of knowledge, and *wisdom must die with thee?* What is it but vanity and fulness of self that gives any man such assuming airs, and such an overbearing manner in conversation, that others must not be suffered to speak, while he must be heard with silence and attention? Nor is silence and attention enough without a submissive faith. If you dare to doubt of what the tongue of pride pronounces, you dare to be impudent in his opinion, and he is ready to tell you so to your face. What is it else but this inward arrogance that casts a scornful eye on any one in the company who dares to offer at an argument against his positions? And a contemptuous scoff is thought sufficient to refute the noblest reasoning. What is it but pride and a domineering spirit that tempts any man to oblige others to bind their understandings and their consciences for ever down to every punctilio of his own opinions, and reverence every sentence as though the pen of divine truth had written them? Happy had it been for the christian world if this assuming and imposing spirit had never been found, but only and always on the heretical side! Then we should have had a more evident and distinguished token where to seek for truth, that is, where this pride and tyranny of souls had no place. But alas!

this is a vain and fruitless wish! Every nation of christendom has felt the infection and the mischief. Even the old idol at Rome, with all his infallibility and thunder, could scarcely demand more sovereignty over our belief, than the positive men of our age even in the land of liberty.

But to proceed, What is it but our pride that breaks in upon the discourse of many a wiser person than ourselves? We are impatient to set forth our own talent of talking, and at the same time to publish our arrogance and shame, and perhaps our nonsense too. Truth and merit are often modest, while ignorance and folly sound their trumpet, and the brass will make itself heard while gold and jewels shine in silence. Again, What is it but this fulness of self that makes persons so unable to bear the least contradiction, even in the common affairs of life? They grow pale with anger or kindle into rage when any of their sentiments are opposed; they feel the inward ferment working and boiling up when their neighbour dares to be of another mind: And it is seldom that they have power or inclination to conceal their resentment: It generally boils over at their lips and betrays the secret fire. Some passionate speech, some wrathful word or other breaks from their tongue, and gives notice of their impatience and high displeasure. What is all this but the fruit of pride and self-sufficiency?

If men had a lower esteem of themselves, they would not always maintain such a full assurance that truth and justice are ever on their side. By this assuming behaviour they forbid all instruction, they stop all the avenues of reason and knowledge, by which further light might enter into their souls and rectify any mistaken sentiment. There is no man lies so far out of the road of illumination and true wisdom, as he that is already very sure his opinions are all sunbeams; Prov. xxvi. 12. *Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit, there is more hope of a fool than of him.* It is with secret pleasure and inward esteem that I have often read those four lines, which that excellent man Doctor John Owen wrote under his own effigies.

"Umbra refert fragiles dederint quas cura dolorque
Reliquias, studiis assiduusque labor.
Mentem humilem sacri servantem limina veri
Votis supplicibus qui dedit, ille videt."

Which may be rendered thus in English:

"This shadow shews the frail remains
Of care and grief and studious pains.
The mind in humble posture waits
A suppliant at truth's sacred gates,
To find some gleams of light appear,
And he that gave it, sees it there."

What an elegance of humility lies couched in the last line, as it were retired from the eye of man, and seen to God only! But let not any of us imagine that a subscription to this great man's doctrines of grace, or a zealous vindication of his most evangelical opinions, is a sufficient proof of a humble spirit. We may depress and even nullify the pride and power of fallen man with a spirit of pride and self-sufficiency. So Diogenes, the cynic or dogged philosopher, is said to have set his dirty feet upon some fine furniture of Plato's bed, and then he boasted himself that he had sunk down and humbled the pride of Plato: Yes, replied the more civil philosopher, and that with a greater load of pride.

We may talk of our own vileness and nothingness with haughty and vain-glorious language, and defend the most self-abasing doctrines of the gospel with an arrogant and imperious temper. Give me the man that lays nature low before God under a living sense and consciousness of its guilt and wretchedness and impotence; who appears to feel every word that he speaks, and his style and his airs are all as humble as his divine doctrine represents him. It is possible for us to take the language of heaven upon our lips with a hell of fire and pride in our hearts, and support even truth or grace itself with intolerable and shameful haughtiness.

II. As a low esteem of self will help us against many errors of the mind, so it will guard us against the follies of the humourist, which are a vice of the will. The wise and lowly mind has very few humours or unreasonable inclinations, and therefore he feels but little vexation or disquietude. He can conform himself to present circumstances without pain; there is no difficulty to please him, he finds an easy chair in every room of his house. It is the humourist that creates perpetual vexation to himself as well as to all around him: You must watch as for your life, if you would never offend him; you must be observant of all his motions and comport with every notice of his pleasure: You can hardly move or speak, but you speak or move amiss: And if you would correct your mistake by doing the reverse of what you did before, this may be quite wrong also, and it is scarce possible for you to be in the right. So difficult, so tiresome, so impracticable a thing it is to please these vain animals, these pettish or wayward creatures, these everlasting children, which are grown to the size of men and women. Methinks I hear them disdain the name of child and resent my description: But let them go on with their disdain and resentment, and swell with their own manly idea: Yet let them know that till they put off these childish and humourous behaviours, they are but infants in longer garments, with all that high opinion and that overgrown esteem they have of themselves. They must begin their education again and unlearn these follies, if ever they would find sincere honour among men of wisdom and goodness. What claim, what pretence has that man to the esteem and love of men whose conduct is insupportable to all those who converse or dwell with him? And what is it but the vast and vain idea he has of himself, that tempts him to suppose his will must be the absolute rule of duty and submission to all who are near him or concerned with him?

Let such persons declaim against tyranny as often and as loud as they please, and argue upon the theme with much wit and reason; let them talk of liberty and slavery in philosophical and just discourses, and appear the most forward and zealous patrons of the freedom of mankind, yet if they were exalted to a throne they would be very tyrants, and the world around them must be all their slaves. Native vice and inbred iniquity would prevail even above their own good reasonings, and mould their practice into that absolute sovereignty and dominion which their own mind and conscience must ever condemn, and which their own lips at special seasons have so plentifully and so justly exposed.

This is sufficiently evident by their conduct wheresoever they happen to have power: They are already little tyrants in their own little dominions, and if they have but one inferior belongs to them, he shall know and feel that they are lords and masters. If their will be crossed in some common affair of life, their loud complaints shall break out at the windows and the doors: The walls of the house shall echo with the sound of their

indignation, till the neighbours are alarmed and enquire into the domestic mischief. You shall see these sons of humour rise from their table in a fury and renounce their food. The breast swells with inward passion and leaves no room for the refreshments of nature: The servants fly scattering into corners for fear: The peace of their dearest relatives is broken, the order of the family thrown into wild confusion, and tempest rises so high in their own bosom, that it will require some hours to calm and compose it. Pride and humour have raised a storm, and it is no small labour to reduce the passions to peace, to smooth all the billows that roar and roll within, and to make the countenance serene again.

And after all, what is the cause of this tumult? What gross and unpardonable crime gave occasion for such resentment and violence? Perhaps dinner was not set upon the table exactly at the appointed moment, the clock has struck five minutes and the table is not covered; or it may be the cook has not performed her part to such a precise degree of nicety and elegance as the master expected, or as the mistress had taught her. "This dish is so insipid and seasoned so low, it is impossible to eat it, and the other is nothing but salt and fire." It is strange that for both these reasons the passions must burn and the heart broil with fury. "What, saith he, shall I never be gratified at my own table?" Or it is frosty weather, and the plates are not quite warm enough, and therefore the master kindles; "must I still be served so? Have ye all conspired that I shall eat a cold dinner to-day?" And yet this man professes to be a philosopher, a man of virtue; he disdains to be led by that mean and brutal thing called appetite, and talks much of subduing the passions. I wish he could but suppose he had any to be subdued. Or perhaps a word is inadvertently spoken in the dining-room which used to be forbidden there; perhaps some grave and serious theme is started in a jovial hour, or some innocent mirth at another time is thought to be unseasonably introduced. Let the cause be what it will, the ear receives the sudden offence, pride feels the affront, the soul ferments into wrath, the tongue gives reproof in thunder and sets the softer part of the household all in tears.

The next day a plate is let fall from a servant's hand, or a glass is broken and the wine spilled on the floor; and if one were to judge of the mischief done by the degree of the sudden clamour, one would be ready to imagine that the pillars of the house were shaken or thrown down, and the outcry gave notice of immediate ruin and death. My reader, it may be, will presently enquire, where this house stands? and where is this wretched character to be found? I confess I was never yet so unhappy as to live in such a family, nor was I ever an eye-witness to these disorders. I must acknowledge also that I know not the persons nor the door of their house: Perhaps they are dead, and the rising generation may be grown calmer and wiser: Nor will I presume to say where any of their kindred dwell; but I fear we need not go far to seek them. It is well if there be any street in this great city which cannot shew us such an inhabitant: It is well if a month can pass away in any town in Great-Britain, without some such ferment of pride and passion, some domestic tumult which has this unhappy original.* Mark the tempestuous

* I almost reprove myself here and suspect my friends will reprove me for introducing such low scenes of life, and such trivial occurrences into a grave discourse. I have put the matter into the balances as well as I can, and weighed the case, and the result is this: General and distant declamations seldom strike the conscience with such conviction as particular representations do; and since this iniquity often betrays itself in these trivial instances, it is better perhaps to set them forth in their full and proper light than that the guilty should never feel a reproof, who, by the very nature of their distemper, are unwilling to see or learn their own folly, unless it is set in a glaring view.

scene, O my soul, mark it wheresoever it occurs with just and everlasting abhorrence; and stand aloof from the vice that raised it. Pursue and practise, O my heart, the lovely virtue of humility: Acquire and maintain a low idea of thyself; then thou wilt bear to have thy humour thwarted, and thy own will opposed without such clamorous and sounding consequences; thou wilt bear the cross incidents of life without the ruffle and disturbance of thy own inward powers, without the pain and terror of thy kindred and friends, and without giving half the street notice of thy folly.

But "strange doctrine is this," saith the master of the house; "must I not bear rule in my own family?" "Must I not be heard," says the mistress, "and obeyed by my own servants? Must not the authority of a father appear among his children, and the mother demand due honour?" Yes, by all means: And the superior character should always appear and shine bright before the household in the wisdom of the command or reproof, and not by the loud and haughty words, or the terrible airs of the reprover. The authority of a parent or a master has but a poor support, where it is maintained with such unreasonable and noisy resentments.

Thus far concerning wrath and tyranny of the violent and sonorous kind: But pride and humour in some complexions have their private and sullen airs, as well as in others the sounding and the clamorous ones. The soul may be full of self, and the man an intolerable humourist, and yet never shake the house, or affright the neighbourhood. Should you happen to cross his will in a trifling instance, he puts on a sudden gloom of countenance, and assumes a forbidding brow, without a single word from his lips; and sometimes it is hard to know what has offended him. Here the haughty and the sullen humours mingle their cursed influences; the soul is like a prisoner in majesty, the wretch stalks about in dark resentment and supercilious silence; a short and disdainful sentence, full of spite, and rancour, and fire, shall break out at certain intervals, and give notice of the hell within. The proud wrath which is pent up in the bosom, as in a close and boiling furnace, must have time to vent itself by slow degrees; in a day or two, or sometimes more, perhaps the ferment may subside, and the man return to his speech again, and to his hours of business, of food and rest. But after all, the poisonous leaven is left still within, and waits only for some new occasion to heave, and swell, and raise a fresh disturbance. I name the man only in this cursed and hateful character; if the softer sex should find it working in themselves, I leave them to be their own reprovers.

Dread the thoughts, O my heart, of such a frantic and self-punishing iniquity. Suppress all haughty conceits of thy own worth and grandeur, lest, meeting with some unhappy ferments of blood and complexion of humours, they work up into such a world of mischief. Have a care of magnifying the image of thyself, and thou wilt not become a slave to such unmanly humours, such haughty and sullen airs, or such wild and unruly hurricanes of spirit. Let the fond child cry and roar because his plaything is broken; let the fool storm or grow sullen because his will is thwarted; let the dog bark and the ox bellow, when the brutal choler is roused within them; but remember thou art a man, a reasonable creature, a christian. It becomes thee well to know thyself, and to govern thy conduct and thy temper. Do not overrate thy own fancy or appetite, nor be too fond of thy own will. Be not violent in any of thy desires: All thy inclinations and thy aversions to the indifferent and common things of life, should be but feeble and indifferent: Do not thou imagine thyself worthy of such a profound subjection of the wills

and humours of all mankind to thy own will and humour. Remember, O my soul, thou art upon a level with all other men in the world, in many more instances than those few things, wherein Providence has raised thee above them.

III. The man who has low thoughts of himself, is not ever in pain to publish his own excellencies, nor seeking to proclaim his own qualifications and honours. Though his zeal for God, and his desire for the good of men, forbid him to wrap *his talent in a napkin*, yet you find him rather backward at first to appear, and not hasty and zealous to display himself. He hardly hears even the voice of Providence when it calls him forth to *arise and shine*. He is so fearful of exaltation among the great, so sensible of his own defects, and pays so much honour to his fellows, that he thinks many a one fitter to perform public offices than himself, and to sustain public honours. *Less than the least* is his motto, and therefore he often hides himself as unworthy to be seen, and below the notice of the world.

But if the world should happen to be so just to merit and virtue, as to raise the humble man from his obscure circumstances, and fix him in a point of light and honour, he shall be the last man that proclaims the justice which the world hath done him, and ascribes it all to the favour of God and man. He carries none of those meannesses about him, by which little souls always distinguish themselves, and betray and expose their folly; for they are vainly fond of their own new title and character, and speedy in demanding due notice of it from others. The humble man practised the true sublime in his lower station, and you see nothing exalted in him now, though his inward worth is rendered more conspicuous. His friends and his kindred find him the same man still. His garments of honour sit close about him, and swell not his figure or appearance. His titles add nothing to his own idea of himself, nor do they tempt him to assume any peculiar airs. He does not imagine that his opinions are now grown more sacred, or more worthy to be imposed; nor does he give a loose to any of his passions with more freedom or sovereignty. Before the hour of his advancement, he was a diamond in a cabinet, and he shone at home, and gave light and beauty to what was near him: And now he is the same jewel set in a public ornament of gold, to glitter and give light to the world; but he owns that he borrows it all from heaven. Place him on high, and displace him again, his constant business is to approve himself to God, and to remember that he is but a man.

How different a character is this from what multitudes assume in our day! How many are impatient of obscurity, and yet worthless of observation! They are daily and hourly pushing forward into every company, and fond of shewing themselves to the world betimes, while their talents are very few, and their furniture exceeding slender. The vain man is not content to enjoy the common pleasures of conversation, but he assumes the first place in it, and affects to outshine all the circle. He is not satisfied to have said a wise or a witty thing upon a proper occasion, or to tell it perhaps to a friend, but, without any occasion at all, he must once a week repeat his wise sayings to the world: He makes them often hear his jests over again till they are weary, and is ever acquainting new company with the pert repartees that he had made some days before. These forward and conceited creatures will make the world know all their talents of body and mind, and will carefully spread abroad those possessions of equipage or title, which help to support their pride; and, as a noble author expresses, "they are so topful of self, that they spill it upon all the company;" and a nobler person than he confirms the reason, *Out of the abundance of their heart the mouth speaketh;* Matt. xii. 34. And surely if the vessel of

the heart were not brimful of self, it would not be always running over at the lips. They regard not the advice of the wisest of men; Prov. xxvii. 2. *Let another praise thee, and not thy own mouth; not thy lips, but the lips of a stranger.*

Besides these vain and shameless boasters, there is another tribe of creatures who are as vain adorers of self; but they put on a disguise, that they may more effectually and secretly secure the praises of their dear and beloved idol. You shall hear them now and then invent an occasion, without any incident leading to it, to drop some lessening word concerning themselves, that the company may give them the pleasure of contradicting them. It is not that these appearing self-abasers believe a word of what they say, nor is it said with a desire that you should believe them when they express their mean esteem of their own talents or virtues; but they are exceedingly fond to hear themselves talked of to advantage, and when they give you this occasion, they expect your civility should incline you to take it. These persons are always angling for praise, and some of them practise it in so gross and inartificial a manner, that the design of their vanity too plainly discovers itself. The bait is lost because the hook appears; and when they have made a speech of their own unworthiness, the company sometimes is so just and so wise as to allow them to be in the right, and so complaisant as not to contradict them: But then how abject, how mortified and simple they look under the painful disappointment! They fished for honour, and to their sore regret they caught the truth. Oh! when shall this haughty thing self unlearn all its vanity? When shall we be content to be unseen and unnoticed in the world? To be unknown, as Jesus the Son of God was, for thirty years together! *Jesus the brightness of his Father's glory* was content to be unknown in a world which he himself created: *He came into the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not;* John i. 10. When shall it be that the professed followers of the blessed Jesus shall have no vain boasters among them, no seekers of their own glory, nor any greedy devourers of their own praises? The appetite of praise, in the sense of the wisest of men, is like the relish of honey: *To eat too much of it* takes away the refined pleasure, and *to search out our own glory, is not glory;* Prov. xxv. 27. But in vain hath Solomon been preaching to these men from his own age till this day, for the voice of wisdom is not heard where pride and self maintain their dominion. They are blind and deaf to all instructors.

Yet it must be confessed, there are some hours and occasions, there are some companies and occurrences in life, which make it proper and almost necessary to speak of one's self to advantage: Prudence and religion should direct us how to distinguish those seasons and those occasions. A wise man, when he is constrained to speak of his own character, or to support his own honour, feels a sort of inward uneasiness, lest he should be taken for a vain-glorious fool, and is even ashamed to speak what is necessary for his own vindication, lest it appear like vanity and boasting. See this notably exemplified in the conduct of St. Paul, the greatest of the apostles, who was furnished with more sublime talents, and blessed with more illustrious success than all the messengers of the gospel of Christ. This very man, who counts himself less than the least of all the saints, was once reviled by some upstarts in the Corinthian church, who pretended to rival his office, and thus they led his converts away from the truth: Then he was compelled to produce his own credentials, to display his own divine commission, and to make his superior qualifications known to the people. See 2 Cor. xi. 5, 6. *I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles; though I be rude in speech, yet not in*

knowledge: We have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things: And then he recounts his abundant labours, his abundant sufferings, and his services to Christ and souls: But mark how often this man of heavenly wisdom represents this his conduct as acting like a fool, and he seems to blush at himself while he *boasts himself a little,* verse 16, &c. *Let no man think me a fool* indeed; but if you will think me so then *as a fool receive me,* and permit me to proceed foolishly in *this confidence of boasting: Are* my rivals *Israelites? So am I: Are they ministers of Christ? I speak as a fool, I am more: In labours, in sufferings, in deaths, more abundant* than all of them can ever pretend to. Boasting of one's self, in the judgment of a great apostle, is so foolish a thing, that when wisdom itself requires him to practise it, he is quite ashamed of it, and almost expects that he shall be taken for a fool.

It is the sentiment of a very famous French author, Mr. Paschal, that "true philosophy teaches men to be humble, to conceal self, to banish the word I, for the most part, out of our conversation; but christianity and the gospel have nullified and destroyed it." Yet, alas! what would some persons have to say in company, if you cut off from their lips the beloved theme of self? What could they find to talk of, if you debarred them of all the language of pride and envy; the language of pride, wherein self is perpetually exalted, and the language of envy, wherein their neighbours are lessened and reproached?

IV. The man who has a low opinion of himself is not so often affronted; he does not so easily take offence; and when he meets with real disgrace and contempt, he does not feel so sharp and painful a sensation of it as galls the heart of the sons of pride. He can bear with more ease that others should think meanly of him, because he first thinks meanly of himself: He is much better fitted to go through the world, where every one must meet with some trials and some reproaches: He learns to bear the scandal of the world with a happy indifference, because he is not so solicitous about their applause: He does not lie so much exposed to disquieting passions by any inroads made upon his honour and fame, because he has a low esteem of himself, and is content without fame and honour.

But the proud and vain creatures who are full of self, and have a high esteem of their own persons and their qualifications, you can hardly speak either to them or of them, but you affront them, unless it be done in a flattering and submissive manner; and some are so humoursome in their pride, that the very manner of this submission must be polite and fashionable, must be agreeable to their fancy, or else they are affronted, and their choler is raised. The man of vanity imagines his character and his figure so exalted, as though he had a right to claim honour from all around him; and upon this account he has an unhappy right to assume to himself more affronts than others, and to vex himself with many resentments above and beyond his neighbours: The idea of his own quality entitles him to it.

"Well, let the vain man swell thus with his own idea, his grandeurs and his honours; let him maintain and exercise this painful and vexatious prerogative of continual resentment, while the God of heaven fills my heart with humility and peace. Then shall I stand aloof from these honourable follies, and be delivered from this disquieting and uneasy consciousness of my own merit; I shall be free from this troublesome and tormenting right of taking offence at every thing: I shall no more resent the little supposed neglects of my inferiors, nor teaze my own heart with those shadows of an affront, which a vain and busy fancy can create hourly. Grant, O my God, thou Father of my spirit,

that there may be no dark corner in my heart to keep such hellish tinder in it, lest I should be kindled and fired with every flying spark."

V. The man who is not wont to raise a great and high idea of himself, can much more easily content himself in a middle station of life, without a fond and anxious pursuit of wealth and grandeur, either for himself or for his household. He can rest satisfied in a mean estate, if the providence of God so appoint it; for what is there in me, saith he, to deserve or expect riches or greatness among men? But he that carries about him an exalted image of his own worth, is pushed on by ambition to climb up to pinnacles, and to venture upon methods dangerous to his soul and conscience, in order to acquire wealth as the support of equipage and grandeur. It is hardly possible for a mortal to be full of self, but he must be worldly-minded: Whereas if we are christians and the sons of heaven in this vain and perishing world, God speaks to us for the most part as he did to Baruch; Jer. xlv. 5. *Seekest thou great things for thyself, seek them not.*

"Stand thou, O my soul, among the ranks of humble christians; look on thyself as *a pilgrim and stranger here;* travel as a foreigner through this dangerous wilderness, *and having food and raiment* to supply thy wants and support thy journey, *be content.* It is not of much importance, whether thou acquire large treasures of that sort of coin which will not pass in the city to which thou art travelling, nor can ever be remitted to thee by any forms of exchange. It is not of great moment, whether thou receive titles and honours among foreigners in this strange country: These honours and titles are the contempt of angels, and are of no account in thy native land, for thou art born from above. Live upon the views and hopes of thy fair inheritance on high, of honours prepared for thee at home in thy Father's house, among the sons and daughters of God, among the angels of heaven, *and spirits of just men made perfect.* Alas! how contrary is the spirit of a christian to the spirit of this world. The one is all for self, and shew, and grandeur; the other abases self, lies at the foot of God, and is content without honour from men. This fulness of self is opposite to the very temper of the gospel, which requires us to *be poor in spirit;* and yet how ready are we to *indulge* it! How few are there among those who take up the name of christian, that watch against this vice, and labour to subdue it! Which of us can lay his hand upon his heart, and say, "there is no pride dwells here?"

SECTION V.

THE PRETENCES OF THE POOR AND THE FAINT-HEARTED ANSWERED.

Upon this challenge, there are two sorts of men that rise up and deny the charge, and with their hand on their heart solemnly declare, there is no pride within them. These are the poor and the faint-hearted. Let us see what their pretences are to avoid this general accusation. Can I be proud, saith the poor wretch, that labours for his daily bread, and can hardly procure it? If you would search for pride, you must go to palaces and knock at the gates of quality. It is only the great and the rich among mankind who look big and despise their neighbour. *They who prosper in the world, and increase in riches,* who are surrounded with servants, and would be worshipped as little gods. *Psalm* lxxiii. 6, 7, 8, 12. It is *their eyes,* which *stand out with fatness,* and because *they have more than heart could wish, pride compasseth them about as a chain;* it is *they* who

talk loftily, and set their mouth against the heavens, they speak wickedly concerning the *oppression* of the poor: But what pride can be found with us? Our clothing is mean and tattered, our food is coarse and scanty, we have nothing to boast of, for we have hardly enough to live upon, and therefore we must needs be humble.

But search thy own heart, O man of poverty, nor let the poor among women neglect the same inward enquiry. Tell me, art thou content with that low station in which God hath placed thee? Is thy will and humour so far mortified, as to be brought down to thy condition? Dost thou not fancy thyself to have deserved something better? Dost thou submit to the will of God as wise, in making thee poor and not rich, a servant and not a master? Art thou so well acquainted with thy sins and follies, as to lie low at the foot of God, and receive all the little portion that he gives thee as from mere grace? Art thou thankful for every mercy, and patient under all the pressing afflictions that attend thy low estate? Doth thy heart never rise against God the Governor of the world, nor repine at his dispensations, as though he had not treated thee according to thy merit? Art thou humble enough to receive alms, if God hath given thee nothing of thy own? And art thou willing to be beholden to others for thy daily bread, and to accept thy portion in that way wherein God is pleased to dispense it without murmuring? He that promises his children in this world food and raiment, has never promised to give it them without dependence: There is no promise which binds him to maintain thy body and thy pride too.

But let us search a little farther. Thou canst not swell among the great ones, nor talk much of thyself among thy equals, and affect a superiority and esteem above them. Dost thou not aggrandize thyself, and swell in thy little station upon some supposed excellencies, either of beauty of the face, or strength of limbs, or sharpness of wit, or tallness of stature? Or perhaps thou art vain enough to betray thy pride even in the tokens of thy servitude, because thy livery is finer, or has more lace upon it than the coat of thy neighbour? Ask thyself again, dost thou never set up for a chief talker in company, and doth thy heart never presume that thou art wiser than those above thee, without any just reason for it? Canst thou bear to be commanded by others, and contradicted by others, and reproved by others, without an inward rising ferment of wrath, and without returning a word of rash provocation? Art thou never inclined to rage and passion when thy ears take in a reproach? Canst thou bear an injury with such humble silence, and forgive thy enemy as a christian ought to do? Art thou not as ready to give or to take offence as any of the rich and the great? And is it thy humility that inclines thee to take offence, or to give it? Where there is little forbearance, and little care to please in our conduct, surely there is some pride at heart.

Upon the whole, I suspect there are more quarrels and contentions among the poorest and meanest of the people, than among the rich and high-born: And the wise man says, Prov. xiii. 10. *It is only from pride cometh contention.* The polite education of the great teaches them to imitate humility and good humour, and by this means many a quarrel is prevented; whereas the poor, who have been unbred and untaught, betray their pride often, and often rush into clamorous contentions.

Let me ask thee yet further, art thou not too fond of some pre-eminence and honour even on a dunghill? Dost thou never despise in thy heart, and disdain those who seem to be inferior to thee in any respect? And yet at other times, art thou not too much ashamed of the rank of life where God has placed thee? Dost thou never abstain from any duties of religion, or duties of common life, merely because thou canst not make so good a

figure among men as others do, and as thou desirest? Enquire of thyself again, is thy behaviour among thy equals modest and meek, and always courteous and obliging? Dost thou never refuse any offices of friendly assistance to thy inferiors or thy equals, from a principle of pride working within thee? Dost thou never disdain to be taught by them, even in some things which thou dost not well know? There is no creature humble who is not teachable, and willing to learn what is necessary and proper to be known. Ask thyself at last, art thou never humoursome and self-willed, never obstinate and unreasonably positive, answering thy superiors with wrath and rudeness? Art thou never gloomy and sullen after a rebuke? Is not thy spirit fretful when thy will is crossed, and thy humour thwarted? Dost thou never meditate revenge?

And now tell me, O son or daughter of poverty, tell me, hast thou no pride? Hast thou none of these symptoms of this mortal malady? No spots of this defilement of soul? No share in this universal crime of the children of Adam? Dost thou think that pride never inhabits a cottage, and never travels but in chariots and coaches? Art thou so weak as to imagine, that a threadbare garment must needs cover a humble heart? When thou hast honestly made all these enquiries which I have pointed out, I hope thy own heart will unlearn this mistake, and teach thee that thou hast not escaped this general guilt and folly. Some of the poorest of mankind have happened to be some of the proudest, in my observation, that I ever met with; and it is possible that others have made the same remark, though it must be owned their temptations to pride are less.

Let us enquire next of the faint-hearted man, the coward of soul, who flatters his infirmity, and thinks himself to be all humility and meekness. I own, saith he, I have a tenderness for myself, but I have no pride. If I am injured and reproached, I cannot well bear it, but I am all in tears; I tremble, and answer not again; my soul sinks within me at the words of slander, and I die at the voice of a proud oppressor; surely this heart of mine is humble.

But tell me, O man, if thou hadst courage and power to revenge the affront, would thou be thus patient? If thou hadst wealth and dignity in the world to support thee, wouldst thou not retort the reproaches of thy adversary, and look down with a sort of disdain upon him who now disdains thee? It is impotence, then, and cowardice, but not humility, which makes thee imitate patience and meekness. It is abjectness of spirit and want of power, and not christian lowliness, that renders thee so silent under injuries. Christ Jesus could command *legions of angels* to destroy his blasphemers; yet *when he was reviled*, he bore it patiently, and *reviled not again; he endured the contradiction of sinners against himself.* But tell me, friend, dost thou never revile those in secret who have reviled thee in public, and that without any plain call of Providence to publish their crimes or follies, and to expose them? Art thou not impatient and inwardly fretful under the hand of God or man, beyond all reasonable degrees? Are not thy lips open in slander, where those whom thou slanderest cannot hear thee? Art thou not ready sometimes to take offence at some innocent words that are spoken, and where, perhaps, an affront was never designed? How dost thou bear a contradiction to thy sayings, or opposition to thy will? Dost thou not kindle into secret resentment, and let wrath burn inwardly on such occasions? Doth not thy bosom swell with indignation at such a season, though thou art afraid to vent it? What is it but an excessive tenderness for thyself, and undue love of honour and applause, and the high opinion that thou hadst

formed of thy worth, that makes thee bear contempt and reproach so ill, and die under a word of slander.

Say again, What is it but the pride of thy heart that tempts thee never to acknowledge a mistake, but always to colour it over with a semblance of truth? Art thou a son or a daughter of Eve, and yet infallible, and not capable of mistaking? Canst thou ever look back and remember the time when thou didst readily confess any folly, or say, I was mistaken, or I acted amiss, and yet has not thy heart been sometimes sensible that thou wert in the wrong? What is it but pride, then, that makes these words so hard to be pronounced? Is it not thy vanity of mind, and unreasonable esteem of thyself, that forbids thee even to see thy error, or to confess thy fault, while all that are around thee behold thy mistake and thy misconduct? Is it thy humility that makes thee abound so much in thy own sense? Is it humility that raises such an anguish of heart, and such a painful vexation within, when thou art treated with small indecencies by thy fellow-creatures? Is it humility that ruffles thy temper, and tears thy spirit, when thou art not esteemed and honoured according to thy worth? Or is it not rather excessive and criminal tenderness for self, and an over-value of thy own merit? That is but poor virtue, that cannot bear to be despised, but faints under a word of contempt and scorn; poor pretence to virtue, indeed, that cannot support itself under an affront from a fellow-worm!

I will readily grant, that the rich and the mighty, and the bold, and the high-spirited and the high-born among men, lie much more under temptations to pride; it is the very sin of their constitution or their condition in life, and perhaps they are more frequently guilty of this iniquity; but if we would all of us search our hearts honestly, and examine our conduct by sincere enquiries, there is not one of us, either in high or low state, would be able to excuse ourselves from this universal contagion and guilt, this original degeneracy and overspreading blemish of human nature.

SECTION VI.

THE HUMILITY AND EXALTATION OF CHRIST PROPOSED AS OUR PATTERN.

Among all the hearts that God ever made, there have never been but three entirely free from this stain and poison; two of them were the hearts of Adam and Eve in the day of their innocence, and happy had it been for us, if pride had never found an entrance there. The third was the heart of the man Jesus, who is God's most beloved Son. It was amazing humility indeed in this glorious person, the Son of God, that he would condescend to be born a son of man, that he should leave *the bosom of the Father*, and all the glories there, to dwell in flesh and blood: And when he entered our world, there was nothing round him but the signs of humiliation, and the marks of deep abasement: He became the child of a poor maid in Galilee, he was content to be born in a stable, *for there was no room for him in the house: He lay* down to take his first nap *in a manger*, below the rank and condition of men; and as though he were a companion for meaner creatures, he borrowed his dwelling from the ox and the ass. This was the accommodation, this the presence-chamber of *the King of Israel*, of *the Son of God.* Come, let us thus contemplate the glorious humility of the blessed Jesus, the humble infancy of our adored Saviour, and let us become infants and humble.

Let us follow and observe him in the progress of life, when he appeared as a young *carpenter*, when he sweat and laboured in the trade of his father Joseph, when he assisted him, as ancient history informs us, to make yokes for oxen, and lived in a lowly cottage suited to those circumstances. No rooms of state, no rich hangings, no carpets or furniture of silk and gold, no costly and glittering things about him. And when he began his ministry, he travelled through the country on foot to preach his divine gospel, when he might have been borne on the wings of angels. He was content with mean lodging in the tents of fishermen, and sometimes *the Lord of glory had not where to lay his head.* He never accepted but of one gaudy day in the period of his life, and then his highest triumph was to *ride upon the colt of an ass* into Jerusalem: His way was *strewed with branches of trees*, and the garments of the poor, and he was attended with a shouting train of the lower ranks of the people: But his more constant dwelling was in cottages, and his accoutrements betrayed universal poverty and meanness: An obscure life on earth veiled the majesty of the King of heaven: Contempt and scorn, infamy and reproach, were his daily companions in the streets of Jerusalem, and his table and his lodging were with poor fishermen in Galilee, the most contemptible part of all the country of the Jews.

And let it be observed here, that every instance of meanness and poverty in the life and circumstances of the blessed Jesus, was a distinct token of the humility of his soul, for it was chosen poverty, it was assumed meanness: When he *was rich* in the glories and splendours of his Father's court in heaven, he laid them all aside for our sakes, *and became poor* on earth, *that through his poverty we might be made rich;* 2 Cor. viii. 9.

What a shameful dimness and disgrace, what divine contempt has the Son of God cast on all the lustre and glory of this world, by his choice of so mean accommodations and so poor an equipage! What a holy disdain of all earthly grandeur and magnificence should we learn from the incarnation and the life of the holy Jesus! Even meanness and poverty should lose their disgraceful appearances, and seem almost an amiable sort of apparel to us, when we remember they were worn by the Son of God.

" Think with thyself, O my soul, what if thou art not seated among the glittering idols of this world, the men of figure and quality, and exalted station! Remember the blessed Jesus was thy forerunner in a low and humble rank of life; Jesus, who went through the deeps of abasement to the temple of the highest honour; and divine wisdom assures thee, *that before honour is humility;* Prov. xv. 33. What if thou hast not the favour of the rich, and the society of the great ones of the earth. Dost thou not hear the promise of the God of heaven, and feel the divine encouragement with surprising delight. *Thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place: With him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit* will I dwell; *Isaiah* lvii. 15. I will be his life and his support. The soul that is truly humble upon religious principles, when he is cast out of the company of the great and the wealthy with scorn, is a partner of the sufferings of the holy Jesus, is an imitator of his virtues, and he shall share in his sacred honours; he shall have the great and blessed God come down and dwell with him here on earth, to enrich him with grace, and he shall be raised to dwell for ever in the courts of heaven with God and with his Son Jesus, who is *the Lord of glory.*

Think yet further, O my soul, what if thy station and place in the visible church should be low and mean, as *a doorkeeper in the house of thy God*, this will not give thy heart

any sensible disquietude, while thou canst assume St. Paul's motto in my text, *Less than the least of all the saints.* Jesus and his disciples were even *cast out of the synagogue;* John ix. 22. Luke iv. 28. Yet he was the first beloved Son of God, and the chief of all the saints both in the lower and in the upper worlds. Look up, my eyes, and behold him now on the throne of heaven, and there also the humblest among the holy ones sits nearest to his majesty; for that seat is prepared for those who are most like himself.

" Labour hourly to subdue thy pride and fulness of self, O my soul! Pursue the grace of humility here below in the deepest degrees of it, and this shall prepare thee for some exalted station on high. I am verily persuaded, the man who called himself *the least of saints* in this world, has a place of honour provided for him among the highest in the world above; and perhaps he sits next to the right hand of Jesus, who is enthroned in glory *at the right hand of God.*

" Farewell, then, vanity and pride! Farewell, ye scenes of grandeur, ye flattering and fading glories of this life! Farewell, ye vain and ambitious titles among my fellow-worms! Be my ears deaf and my heart dead to all the noisy pomp, to all the sounding honours of this world! Let me be an humble and a holy follower of the holy and the humble Jesus! I adore him, I love him, I would fain be more like him. He is my divine example, and my forerunner to the world of joy above: He has a crown there provided for every humble soul, *a crown which shall never fade:* he has names of dignity for all his saints, but *on his* own sacred *head are many crowns,* and to his name belong superior honours: *To the Lamb that was slain* ascribe *glory and majesty, and* universal *blessing for ever and ever.*"

A DEFENCE

AGAINST THE TEMPTATION TO

SELF-MURDER:

WHEREIN THE

CRIMINAL NATURE AND GUILT OF IT ARE DISPLAYED,

THE VARIOUS

PRETENCES FOR IT ARE EXAMINED AND ANSWERED;

SEASONABLE ADVICE

IS PROPOSED TO THOSE WHO ARE TEMPTED, AND TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN DELIVERED FROM THIS TEMPTATION.

TOGETHER WITH

SOME REFLECTIONS ON EXCESS IN STRONG LIQUORS, DUELLING,

AND

OTHER PRACTICES A-KIN TO THIS HEINOUS SIN.

THE PREFACE.

IT can be of no importance to the world to know the particular occasion of this composure. It is sufficient to say, that the rude draughts and sketches of it, thrown into the form of a letter, have been so far honoured by divine grace, as to save a soul from perishing.

The numerous self-murders which we read in our papers of weekly news, inform us that the tempter is not asleep. The last general bill of mortality tells us of fifty-nine who are known to have destroyed themselves the year past; besides seventy-four who were drowned, and forty-three who were said to be found dead. Now among these hundred and seventeen, who can tell how many might be accessary also to their own death, though surviving relatives might conceal it from the notice of the public. This very week I have read four more. Such numbers of these tragical events are a very unhappy, yet a sensible argument, that Satan, the cruel adversary, walks about through every street of this great city as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. It is the design of this little treatise to discover the infinite mischief of his temptations, and to teach mankind how they may resist him, and defeat his fatal purposes.

I grant, that the sceptical humour and growing atheism of the age, with the disbelief of a future state, and of all the terrors of another world, are the profane and deadly principles which influence some of these unnatural and murderous practices.

But professed atheism and infidelity are not the only causes. Suicide is often owing to the shameful neglect of all religion, even by those who pretend to believe it, and to their strange thoughtlessness of God and heaven and hell. The wild and ungoverned lusts and passions of mankind, their secret criminal practices and shameful iniquities that are afraid of the light, the frequent crosses and calamities of this life, their raging impatience of mind under disappointments, with a certain horror of poverty and contempt and shame, hurry on foolish and guilty creatures to hide themselves in death and the grave. Besides all this, the dark and sullen complexion, and the gloomy melancholy of some persons, their inward uneasiness, their jealousies, and fretful disposition, are such unhappy circumstances as a subtle devil improves for his own pernicious designs. These are the fatal springs of such tragical events in our day: These are the dismal seeds of many a bloody harvest, which the great enemy of God and man reaps daily amongst us.

May the blessed Spirit of God lift up a standard against the destroyer, and make these papers useful to support, defend, and relieve those poor deluded creatures, who are worried by his rage, and ensnared by his devices! And in the day of the Lord, when every secret thing shall be revealed, may this discourse appear to have been a successful, though an humble, instrument in the hand of the Spirit of God, for the deliverance and salvation of those who have been tempted, and for the rescue of many a soul from present death and everlasting burnings.

I had some thoughts of adding a few pages at the end of this book concerning a melancholy temper of mind, whether it arises from the disorders of animal nature, or from an uneasy set of thoughts relating to this world or the next. But when I came to review what Mr. Timothy Rogers had written on that subject, and the little discourse that Mr. Clifford had collected out of the writings of the late eminent Mr. Richard Baxter, which was recommended by several ministers, I found it needless for me to attempt any thing farther. In those treatises the reader will meet with so particular an account of the nature of this affliction, of the causes of it, and of the methods of relief, as may be rendered very serviceable, through the blessing of heaven, to those who are thus afflicted, or to their friends about them, who are concerned for their welfare. And may these methods prove happily successful for their relief! That by the divine aids of providence and grace, they may be preserved from so dismal and mournful a death, wherein surviving friends can find little comfort or hope, but what arises from the former religious life of those unhappy creatures, and the apparent symptoms of present distraction.

Though such themes as these are not a very delightful entertainment either to him that writes or reads, yet the calamitous and wretched circumstances both of flesh and spirit in this feeble and dangerous state of frailty, sin and temptation, make such discourses necessary at some seasons to prevent the ruin of mankind. O blessed state of souls in the upper world, who are released from this body of sin and death, and enjoy a glorious and sublime security from all the mischievous influences of the tempter: Though we dare not cut the thread of our own lives, nor fly from our present state of trial till our Creator appoint the day of our deliverance, it is yet our duty and our interest to get our souls weaned daily from all the scenes of this lower world, since we know we must shortly leave them. Let us labour cheerfully here on earth in the various services of God and men, but with our spirits so attempered to the business and the blessedness of heaven, that we may as cheerfully obey the divine summons, and pass the important hour of death with holy serenity and triumph. *Amen.*

London,
January 28, 1725-6.

A

DEFENCE

AGAINST THE

TEMPTATION TO SELF-MURDER.

SECTION I.

THE UNLAWFULNESS OF IT DISPLAYED.

WHEN an atheist is tempted to destroy himself, he has no concern whether it be lawful or no, for he knows of no law nor power that can reach to punish him. Such a wretch doth not believe there is any other world to receive him when he dies out of this, nor any God there to call him to account. He supposes his soul vanishes into air, and his dust is safe from vengeance. These are the sentiments of atheism; and vile and irrational as they are, yet they are the only principles that can give any tolerable colour or pretence for self-murder.

But if a man believes there is a God that made him, if he believes his soul is immortal, and that his Creator has ordained it to dwell in a human body for a season, and to pass a state of probation there in order to eternal reward or punishment, surely this man must confess himself accountable to God hereafter for all his conduct here: And one would think such a person should never doubt, whether the destruction of his body by his own hands, and the wilful dismission of his soul, were a crime or no. Especially if he profess to believe his Bible, one would wonder he could ever imagine it an innocent thing for him to do violence to himself, and to shed his own blood. But the follies of mankind are amazing, and the strange turns of thought under the deceitful impressions of the tempter are unaccountable. Poor deluded creatures are first tempted to hope, that they shall put an end to their present sorrows by a wilful death, then they wink their eyes against the glaring guilt of it, and try to persuade themselves that it is no sin.

Some persons have been so hardy as to reason upon this point, and to argue that self-murder has nothing criminal in it. Strange, that hell and destruction should have advocates among the sons of men! that death should have such accomplices in the land of the living! But since it has been so, let us plead against them in the name of the living God; let us try whether we cannot by the force of reasoning drawn from the word of God, as well as from the light of nature, make it appear with bright evidence, that suicide, or self-destruction, is prohibited by the divine law, both natural and revealed; that it includes aggravated guilt in the nature of it; and consequently that the person who dares commit this crime, stands exposed to severe and terrible punishments in the invisible world.

I. Consider that the great God, the Maker of all things, has assumed to himself the power and lordship of life and death; *I kill and I make alive;* Deut. xxxii. 39. It is he sends us into this world, and he expects that we should wait his will to send us out of it. Has not our Creator formed us with infinite wisdom, and placed us by providence

to act our parts, maintain our posts, and fulfil some service for him in this part of his dominions? Has he not a right to determine the time of our continuance here, and the moment of our removal? Is it not an invasion of that divine right and prerogative, if we will appoint the time for ourselves without his order, and contrary to the rules he has given us for our government? Where is his licence for any man to dismiss himself? A spirit, who is ordained to dwell in flesh, what warrant has he to destroy that flesh at his own pleasure, to quit his appointed station in this visible world, and to force his way into God's invisible dominions, before he obtain the leave of his Maker? Or dares he do this at a venture, according to his own capricious humour without a warrant from on high?

Can a soldier who is fixed in his post, though it rain and blow at midnight, forsake his guard before his general permit? Can such a faithless centinel expect any thing but frowns and death from the general? Is it excuse enough to say, "I broke the orders of my superior because it rained?" What a piece of shameful cowardice is this? And dares a soul that is placed by its Creator to act in a human body dismiss itself, and fly from its appointed station, as far as the distance of two worlds, and yet hope for approbation? Dares such a soul run from its post, into the immediate presence of its sovereign Lord, in the world of spirits, and say, "I have fled from my post because I found it troublesome, I have done it indeed without leave, and yet I expect a reward?" May not such a wretch rather justly expect to be banished for ever from the presence of his Maker, and be doomed to suffer eternal penalties without mercy and without hope?

Perhaps you will tell me, "There is no want of courage discovered in self-murder: And that it was not accounted cowardice but a noble instance of fortitude in many of the heathen heroes, who put an end to their lives with their own hands, on various occasions."

Answer. Concerning the heathens who destroyed themselves, I shall speak in another place. It is enough at present to say this, that whatsoever degrees of courage a mistaken fancy may ascribe to those ancients, I must confess I am of a very different opinion concerning the suicides in our day: The attribution of any honour to a self-murderer has but little reason or justice in it, at any time when it is thoroughly examined: And perhaps such a bare supposition may administer too much fuel to so dreadful a temptation, rather than quench the sparks of it.

It is evident to me, that the uneasy and impatient man has not courage enough to bear the arrows of adverse providence; he has not firmness of mind sufficient to stand the shock of sickness or pain; or perhaps his heart has not resolution enough to endure the thoughts of poverty or contempt; he is frighted at the sounds of reproach and infamy; he turns his back and flies from the scene of battle, when poverty or shame stare him in the face: Or perhaps the mere imaginary terrors which himself has raised, put him to flight; and because he cannot get far enough from them in this world, he throws himself headlong from the stage of life, and leaps into the world of spirits.

Now, if there be any point of courage in this practice, it is an impious and diabolical one: It is a rushing into the presence of an almighty and dreadful God, to tell him face to face, that you have quitted the station he hath appointed you, that you have broken his commission, you have disobeyed his orders, and you expect his sentence for eternity. This is tremendous courage indeed; and an outrageous fit of impious rashness. All the rest is mere weakness of mind; it is egregious cowardice mingled with extreme folly.

II. Consider the express prohibitions of murder in the word of God, and the frequent occasional and severe denunciations of God's wrath against murderers in various parts of scripture.

The sixth command offers itself with bright evidence to this service; Exod. xx. 13. *Thou shalt not kill*, or, *Thou shalt do no murder*, that is, thou shalt not take away the life of man.

You will say, "I may have power and right to take away my own life, though I must not take away my neighbour's." I answer,

First, The command is expressed in general terms, which include both ourselves and our neighbours: Now there is no subsequent limitation of it only to our neighbour, either in the word of God, or in the reason of things; and who has given you authority to limit it?

The rest of the commands of the second table which are capable of being referred to ourselves, do as much exclude the same practices against ourselves, as against our neighbours. I must not commit adultery with another person, nor must I defile myself with adultery. I must not bear false witness against my neighbour, nor must I speak a false thing about or against myself. I must honour my own parents, and by the same reason, if I am a parent, I must not do any thing to dishonour my own person or parental character in the sight of children. Now since ourselves, as well as our neighbours, are taken into consideration in all these commands, wheresoever it is possible in the nature of the thing, I think the destruction of ourselves, as well as of our neighbours, is equally forbidden by the sixth command.

Thus this law secures the life of every man, woman, and child in the world, who have not forfeited their lives to the public justice by some capital crime: And even then it is only the public officer, or the person authorized by the law of the land, who has right to take away the life of the criminal.

Secondly, I answer, The injury forbidden in the sixth command does not only reach to the person who is slain, but to his friends, his relations, his country, and the community to which he belongs. It is upon this account chiefly that human penalties are annexed to murder by men, because the community is hereby deprived of a member, or the prince of a subject, and the various parts of that community are deprived of a helper. It is also upon this account of the injury done to our fellow-creatures, that God has appointed blood to be repaid with blood, as he is the sovereign guardian of human society.

Now I would ask, Whether the same injury is not done to our friends, our kindred and our country, if we murder ourselves as if another hand murdered us? Yes surely, and in some respects a greater injury too, especially to our friends, as shall appear hereafter.

But besides all this, the injury reaches to God our Creator; it is he has appointed to each person his station in this world for some special service to himself as well as to our fellow-creatures. And as another man must not injure and affront our Creator by removing us from this station, so neither must we do it ourselves.

It is not for any man to say, "I can be of no service to God or man in this world; I am rather a burden to the earth, a piece of useless lumber; therefore I throw myself out of the way." But can you tell for what services God has reserved you? Are you one of his council? Do you know what future events may arise, wherein you may be made

use of, if not in an active manner, yet at least in a passive way, to carry on some part of the divine scheme of providence? Now for this reason no sort of murder is permitted, that so no man may be cut off from all future and possible capacities of service to God or his fellow-creatures. God has not made any man a judge in his own case, to determine for himself concerning his own life and usefulness in opposition to the general sense both of nature and scripture, and the constant judgment of divine as well as human laws.

Since therefore all the injuries that I have mentioned against God and man are committed by the murder of one's self as well as one's neighbour, it has pleased God severely to prohibit all murder, and he has fixed the sixth commandment in the table of his moral law, where it stands like a cannon planted with open mouth against the man that dares such a public and spreading injury to God and man. It is a piece of divine artillery charged with eternal death. 1 John iii. 15. *No murderer hath eternal life abiding in him*, that is, has no right to eternal life, for he has not the principles or seeds of it in his heart; and then surely eternal death belongs to him, and must be his portion.

Another prohibition of murder is found among the first laws that God gave to the new race of men after the flood; Gen. ix. 6. *Whosoever sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God made he man.* I confess there is some difficulty in determining precisely in what sense we must take the image of God in this place: For the moral image of God, which consisted in righteousness and holiness, was lost by the fall, whereas that part of the divine image which stands here as an argument against the destruction of man is supposed to continue in his fallen estate.

Shall we then suppose it has a reference to the erect posture of his body, or the shape and figure of mankind, in which God might appear to our first parents? Then murder is forbid upon this account, because it destroys the honourable figure and character of human nature, whereby it is superior to all brutal animals, and whereby it was dignified either by the appearance of God the Father, or rather his Son Jesus Christ in it: Now this reason stands firm against the destruction of ourselves as well as of others.

Or does it mean the dominion of man over brute creatures, wherein he bears some image or resemblance of God's dominion over this lower world? But that reaches not beyond this life, and therefore there is an end put to this dominion, to this part of the divine image by all murder, whether of others or of ourselves.

Or shall we say, that the immortality of the soul of man is that image of God which is here designed? Now though the soul cannot be slain, yet by murder an immortal creature is sent into a certain and determined state of happiness or misery, for a long eternity, and the great God will not suffer any man to take upon him to send an immortal soul into so awful an estate on a sudden, and by the mere caprices of his own will: And therefore he hath required blood for blood: And since he hath appointed that man should execute that sentence on the murderer of another man in this world, we have abundant reason to believe that he will take care to execute his own just vengeance upon a self-murderer in the invisible world, though he hath put himself out of the reach of human vengeance.

Or suppose after all I have not hit upon the exact sense of the image of God in this place, yet this is very certain, that let the image of God signify what it will, this image is as much injured by the murder of one's self, as by the murder of one's neighbour, and therefore the prohibition stands in the same force against both.

III. Consider that our Saviour himself when he had a body prepared for him by the

Father, and was sent into the world, seems to acknowledge that, as he stood in the rank of men, he had not power or authority to lay down his own life, but by the commandment of God his Father. He speaks of it as a special and peculiar commission, that he had power to lay down his life as well as power to take it again, neither of which other mortals are invested with; John x. 18. *I lay down my life of myself; I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again: This commandment have I received of my Father.* The original word for power is ἐξουσία, which signifies right or authority, which he derived from the peculiarity of his divine commission. Otherwise he had been obliged to have used all his native power and skill to have saved himself from the hands of his enemies. Now if our Saviour himself, considered merely as man, and abstracted from his divine nature, had not a right to dispose of his own life at pleasure, without divine commission, certainly no other man may claim this right.

IV. Consider that had this practice been lawful, all the pious persons from Adam to this day, who had been plunged into extreme distress and anguish of mind or body in this world, might have relieved themselves by this method; all the martyrs and confessors of scripture who were stoned; who were sawn asunder, who were put into lions' dens, who were scourged and tortured, seem to be guilty of great folly, if they themselves might lawfully have put an end to their miseries by this shorter method: And the honours that the Bible casts upon these men are vain honours, if they endured these terrible trials, when they might have escaped them all without guilt or transgression.

Let it be noted also, that many good men of old have earnestly wished to die, particularly Elijah, Job, Jeremiah, &c. but not one of them durst indulge a thought of procuring death to themselves, as being under the most certain impressions of the horrible and crying impiety of such a practice: The utmost efforts they made toward it was to pray God to release them, but they never dared to attempt their own release.

V. Consider what sort of men they have been who are recorded in scripture as self-murderers. Achitophel, a false traitor, who counselled Absalom to rebel against his father David. Saul, a bloody man, who forsook God and was forsaken of God. Zimri, a most wicked king of Israel, and Judas who betrayed our blessed Saviour, &c. Good men may be tempted sorely in this matter, but we do not find that they have been given up to comply with the temptation.

You will readily reply, "but what was Samson? Is he not numbered among the ancient and sacred heroes who lived and died in faith; *Heb.* xi. 22. And did he not destroy himself together with the Philistines when he pulled down the house upon their heads? And was not this done also with design and resolution, when he said, "Let me die with the Philistines."

Answer 1. It is evident the apostle in that chapter is reckoning up all the glorious effects of faith, whether it be faith of miracles which may be found with sinners, or faith which accompanies salvation and belongs only to the saints. Now there is very little of the character of a saint that belongs to Samson either in his life or in his death. The Spirit of the Lord came upon him, indeed, as a spirit of miracles, for the deliverance of Israel from oppression, but his life seems to be stained with many crimes; and in the moment of his death he desired to be avenged of the Philistines for his two eyes: So that we find little or nothing of the fruits of the Spirit in him, which the apostle describes; Gal. v. 22. *Gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance,* &c.

2. If it should be granted that Samson had religion and virtue enough in him to be called a good man, yet as the other exercises of his miraculous strength were performed under the influence of the Spirit, or by inspiration, so we may suppose that at his death he had a divine call, or inspiration, as he had certainly miraculous aid, to destroy the Philistines, though he himself fell with them; and though it must be confessed there was a mixture of his own sinful revenge in his heart, yet the Spirit of God might dictate that action in general, though not as mingled with his own revenge. Now since this was done by a special divine commission, it cannot be drawn by us into an example for our imitation.

Well, if suicide cannot be justified by the examples of scripture, you will try what the Roman and Greek historians can do towards it. Perhaps, you will say, "Surely had it been so criminal an action, the great and wise men of antiquity would not have indulged the practice of it, nor would their names have been enrolled among the sons of honour. But we find Curtius and Cato, Brutus and Otho, and others who destroyed themselves, celebrated as men of virtue, as noble patriots, and great heroes, even on the account of their death as well as their life."

Answer. Alas! to what purpose should a christian cite the heathens to justify that which the scripture forbids? They had very little knowledge of the true God, very dark and doubtful notices of their duty to their Creator, to themselves, and to their fellow-creatures: And though the light of nature would have taught them better had they duly and carefully consulted it, yet it is evident that they actually mistook their duty in many instances that were obvious enough to common reason. They imagined that the destruction of a tyrant, the preservation of their country, or the mere honour of their own nation, or the guard of their real or fancied virtues, was sufficient to license and sanctify almost any practices whatsoever.

They had many false and foolish notions of courage, greatness and honour, which betrayed them into real iniquities. They sent forth their armies to rob and plunder nations to satisfy their own ambition and thirst of honour; they could murder thousands of mankind in order to enlarge their bounds of empire, and for the glory of their king or of their native city: It was no wonder that men of such principles should imbrue their hands in their own blood under the influence of such sort of motives and pretences. Besides this, they were animated with the expectation of fame after death: Immortal memory and renown were the rewards of what they called heroic actions. And thus the heathens might glory in their own shame, but they are not set up for our guides or patterns. A christian must regulate his whole conduct by the law of his God, by the rules of the gospel, by the views and hopes and fears of eternal rewards or punishments, which are revealed to him in a diviner light.

Let it be considered yet further, that the motives, by which some of these heathen heroes were drawn to self-destruction, are such as scarce ever come into the question now-a-days, and do by no means respect men in the ordinary situation of human life. Which of us has any view or hope or pretence to benefit thousands by our death? To save a nation from civil war? To deliver our country from the anger of God and a pestilence by offering ourselves as a sacrifice? To sink in one ruin with the liberties of a state, which we ourselves have long supported? These are the excuses that are made for those ancient heathens, and covered their names from infamy in such a bloody action. The history of these men, and the honour done them by pagan writers, can give no

manner of sanction to those mean and ridiculous motives which are the occasions of self-murder in our weekly newspapers, in the present age. The Romans themselves would have made a jest of those, who pretended to imitate these their heroes, without being placed in the same circumstances, or having equal motives; and, as a modern writer well expresses it, "Should any man now have it in his power to acquaint the ghost of Cato or Brutus, that there was a country in which men often deliberately and coolly dispatch themselves, and voluntarily flee out of life; one because his mistress is not propitious to his passion; another, because his sordid love of money has been disappointed; another, because he has dissipated his whole fortune in the most dissolute and abandoned luxury and debauchery; another, because his scheme for advancement to honour has been dashed to pieces; another, because in the midst of hoards of money, he is terrified with the dread of future want; and others, perhaps, because the weather lies heavy upon them, and the wind blows from an unfavourable corner: And should they be acquainted, that in all these cases, their names and their examples are appealed to; what would they say? They would declare it a country of madmen and fools, and lament their own fate, to be cited for the justification, or excuse of odious, base and unseemly actions, which have no pretence worthy of a man, to cover them.

"Not that I am at all, says this writer, designing to justify those great men themselves. On the contrary, many things might be urged against those ancients, even upon their own scheme, and the principles of reason. If I should say that the death of Cato was a mixture of impatience and pride; that he ought in love to his country to have reserved himself for a better opportunity of serving it; that it is probable, from the events which followed, that he might afterwards have been an instrument of good to it; that he rashly, and in a passion, judged of what he could not well judge of, that it was a sullen pride of heart not to deign to live, because in one trial, his cause had not been successful; and that a true greatness of soul had been more seen, even in accepting his life, if that had been necessary, at the hands of the man, in whose power omnipotent providence or fate, which he believed irresistible, had put it: And this would be hard to refute upon the principles of any philosophy."

I might add yet further, that though some of the philosophers among the heathens did allow, yet the best of them did utterly condemn this practice, as a rash forsaking the station in which the providence of their gods had placed men. Though I have argued particularly on this head already, yet in this place I cannot forbid myself the pleasure of citing the strong expressions of some of these heathens against self-murder, as they are agreeably represented by Dr. Samuel Clarke, in his discourse of Natural and Revealed Religion. Proposition the first.

"He that sent us into the world, and alone knows for how long time he appointed us our station here, and when we have finished all the business he intended we should do, can alone judge when it is fit for us to be taken hence, and has alone authority to dismiss and discharge us. This reasoning has been admirably applied by Plato, Cicero, and others of the best philosophers; so that though the stoics of old, and the deists of late, have in their ranting discourses, and some few of them in their rash practice, contradicted it; yet they have never been able, with any colour of reason, to answer or evade their force of argument: Which indeed to speak the truth has been urged by the forementioned philosophers, with such singular beauty, as well as invincible strength, that it seems not capable of having any thing added to it. Wherefore I shall give it you only in some

of their own words." "We men," says Plato in the person of Socrates, "are all by the appointment of God in a certain prison or custody, which we ought not to break out of, and run away. We are as servants, or as cattle in the hands of God: And would not any of us, saith he, if one of our servants should contrary to our direction, and to escape out of our service, kill himself, think we had just reason to be very angry, and, if it was in our power, punish him for it? So likewise Cicero: God, says he, the supreme Governor of all things, forbids us to depart hence without his order: And though when the Divine Providence does itself offer us a just occasion of leaving this world," as when a man chooses to suffer death rather than commit wickedness, "a wise man will then indeed depart joyfully, as out of a place of sorrow and darkness into light; yet he will not be in such haste as to break his prison contrary to law; but will go when God calls him, as a prisoner when dismissed by the magistrate or lawful power." *Tusculan. questionum libro primo.* Again; "That short remainder of life," saith he, "which old men have a prospect of, they ought neither too eagerly to desire, nor yet on the contrary unreasonably and discontentedly deprive themselves of it; for as Pythagoras teaches, it is as unlawful for a man without the command of God, to remove himself out of the world, as for a soldier to leave his post without his general's order." *De Senectute.* And in another place: "Unless that God," saith he, "whose temple and palace this whole world is, discharges you himself out of the prison of the body, you can never be received to his favour. Wherefore you, and all pious men, ought to have patience to continue in the body, as long as God shall please, who sent us hither; and not force yourselves out of the world before he calls for you; lest you be deserters of the station appointed you by God." *Somnium Scipionis.* And, to mention no more; that excellent author, Arrian, book the first. "Wait," saith he, "the good pleasure of God: When he signifies it to be his will, that you should be discharged from this service, then depart willingly; but in the mean time have patience, and tarry in the place where he has appointed you: Wait, and do not hurry yourselves away wilfully and unreasonably." The objections, which the author of the Defence of Self-murder, prefixed to the oracles of reason, has attempted to advance against this argument, are so weak and childish, that it is evident he could not, at the time he wrote them, believe in earnest that there was any force in them: As when he says, that the reason why it is not lawful for a centinel to leave his station without his commander's order, is because he entered into the service by his own consent; as if God had not a just power to lay any commands upon his creatures, without their own consent: Or when he says, that there are many lawful ways to seek death in; as if, because a man may lawfully venture his life in many public services, therefore it was lawful for him directly to throw it away upon any foolish discontent." Thus far Dr. Clarke.

This objection, drawn from the practice of the heathens, has diverted me from my train of arguments: But I proceed,

VI. Reflect upon the nature of the fact: Perhaps it is the most unnatural practice that can come within the reach of man. Self-preservation is such a law of nature, that it is written as it were in the animal as well as in the mind, it is mingled with our flesh and blood and our very constitution; we must sin therefore against our bodies and our souls together, when we perpetrate this wickedness. It is well expressed by a late writer that "our Creator would not have armed life with such a dread of death, which is rarely overcome, nor involved the contemplation of death in so many appalling doubts and apprehensions, if the quitting of life of our own accord had been agreeable to his schemes

of providence. It is evident God hath way-laid the roads to death with ambuscades of terror, on purpose to prevent our voluntary approaches to it. Nature itself is passionately abhorrent from it; it throws our whole frame into a tumult, and the man who hath resolved it, finds a drawback within himself that silently withholds him."

Upon these accounts, it is hardly supposed to be done without some strong temptations of the devil, that evil and cruel spirit, who is a murderer from the beginning: And it is he only who finds his account in it, and regales his hellish passions of malice and envy against God and man. This vile spirit is eminently gratified when we give ear to such a temptation: He had the impudence to tempt our blessed Lord in this manner, "Cast thyself down from the pinnacle of the temple;" but our Lord repelled him with indignation, and left us an example: The hour, in which his Father had appointed him to yield up his life, was not yet come.

VII. Consider that if it be lawful for you to put an end to your own life because you are weary of it, perhaps it would also be lawful for any other man to do the same for you with your leave and at your request. But it is not lawful for another man to do it, therefore, not for yourself. I borrow my argument from this consideration, that since it is lawful for me to cut off a gangrened or a broken limb in order to save life, it is lawful to give my arm to the surgeon and to desire him to cut it off, and the surgeon does it without blame in the sight of God or man. This he could not do without my leave. But my own right to do it being conveyed to him does in this case authorize him to do it. So if I had right to destroy myself, my own right would authorize another to destroy me.

I grant there are some cases, wherein a man may possess an inalienable right which he cannot convey to another, such are rights of honour, as nobility, magistracy, rights of natural relation, as paternity, filiation, &c. because these relate to other persons. But so far as any man has a right to injure, or maim, or destroy his own body, I see no reason why it may not be conveyed to another by his authority: And if a man might lawfully stab himself, I think the same right might be conveyed to another man to stab him.

Now ask yourself, if a person were weary of his life, and begged that you would knock him on the head, would you not think it unlawful, and consequently be afraid to destroy him, though at his own request? Do you not think this, in the common nature of things, would be a great injury to his relations, to his friends, to his country, and to human society, though the person himself desired it? Do you not imagine this would be true murder both in the sight of God and man, and justly expose you to punishment? But it seems to me, that he might as well give you power to murder him, as assume the power himself. If the taking away the life of such a person would be murder, then the taking away your own life is murder too, and therefore by no means is it an act allowable or lawful in the sight of God.

VIII. Consider how many practices there are which God has forbidden in his word as being injurious to our own bodies, yet each of them seem to be far less pernicious in their nature, and in their consequences, than self-murder is; and thence we may draw a strong argument to prove that self-murder is not only sinful but a very heinous sin. All manner of intemperance is forbidden by the word of God; gluttony and drunkenness have a tendency to ruin our health and destroy our natures, and these are prohibited in the Old Testament, and in the New. Whoredom, or fornication, is a sin against the body, and as such it is exposed in scripture as an aggravated iniquity that a man should sin against

his own body; 1 *Cor.* vi. 18. The body of a christian is said to be the temple of the Holy Spirit, and him that defiles this temple God will destroy; 1 *Cor.* iii. 16, 17. Now are there such denunciations against those iniquities that injure or defile the human body, and must we not suppose the guilt of the person is more aggravated, and that his punishment shall be more severe who wilfully destroys the body which God has given him?

God has been pleased to set a guard upon human life, by forbidding all those excesses and irregularities of appetite and passion which injure health, and tend to the ruin of our natures; and doubtless the actual destruction of our natures is a more heinous crime in his sight.

IX. Consider further, how inconsistent is this practice with that dependence on the providence of the Almighty, that humble waiting for God, that trust and hope in divine mercy, and that patience, resignation and quiet submission which are due to God our supreme Governor. Suppose he is pleased to try us with a delay of answer to our prayers, with poverty, disappointment, sickness, pain or trouble in the flesh, must we resolve to die presently? This is breaking away from God's hand in an unwarrantable manner; it is a renouncing of that self-dedication and surrender which we have made of ourselves to God; it is utterly contrary to that humble devotedness to the will of God which christianity requires of all its professors. How can I say, I am the Lord's, or thy will be done, when I will not so much as let him determine in which world I shall serve him, the visible or the invisible?

Perhaps it is the present purpose of God to put you under this instance of probation, as part of the trial of your obedience in order to a future reward; it is the language of Divine Providence when we are exercised with any pressing affliction, "let me see how you will honour my sovereignty with holy submission, with constancy and patience; let me see whether you will glorify your Creator, your Governor, and your Lord, in the passive as well as in the active parts of life. No, says the self-murderer, I will not endure this trial; I will rid myself of this hardship; I will bear it no longer; I have no patience, nor will I submit to this method of divine probation; I will hasten my appearance before the judgment-seat; there let my Judge determine my final estate according to the days of my past life and past trials, for I will not suffer my state of probation to be prolonged any farther." How is it possible now that such a rebellious creature can ever expect favour or absolution at the hands of God his judge?

Thus I have finished the considerations which, in my opinion, give abundant proof of the unlawfulness of such a practice, and I would conclude them with this solemn sentence, the man who can take all these arguments into his view, and in the full exercise of his reason, will after all venture upon so unnatural and aggravated a crime, and will plunge himself into eternity on such groundless presumptions of divine pardon, must in the common sense of mankind here, and in his own awakened conscience hereafter, be deemed a just sacrifice of divine wrath, and for ever unworthy of pardoning grace.

SECTION II.

SOME GENERAL DISSUASIONS FROM SELF-MURDER, BY SHEWING THE FOLLY AND DANGER OF IT.

When this bloody practice has been proved to be highly criminal in the sight of God, we can hardly suppose that any other considerations should be more effectual to deter a

man who professes christianity from the guilt of so aggravated a sin: Yet it may be possible to set the dangerous and dreadful consequences of this practice in a fuller view, a more diffusive and affecting light; for if you turn it on all sides it has still some new appearances of terror, and furnishes out new dissuasives from the execution of it.

I. Consider that it is too dangerous an attempt to venture upon it unless you had a full assurance of its lawfulness. Now suppose the power of your own iniquities, the artifices of the tempter, and the prevailing ill humours of animal nature, should join together so fatally as to blind your eyes against the full conviction of its sinfulness, yet you can never prove that self-murder is certainly a lawful thing. The furthest you can go is to suppose, that possibly it may be lawful; but on the other hand, if you should be under a mistake, it is a dreadful, it is a fatal, it is an eternal one. You put yourself beyond all possibility of rectifying this error through all the long ages of futurity.

Whatsoever vain fancies some of the heathens have indulged who knew not God, and had very little and dark apprehensions of a future state, yet in the christian world the utmost that the most sanguine or most melancholy among this tribe can well pretend is, that perhaps it may be lawful, or at least that it is a little and a very pardonable crime; and they have been forced to wink their eyes against the light to arrive at this perhaps. But if it be not pardonable, then nothing remains for the criminal but everlasting punishment. That terrible word, eternal, eternal, eternal misery, carries such a long doleful accent with it, and includes such an immense train of agonies without hope, that it is infinitely better to bear the sorrows, the trials and uneasinesses of this life for a few short and uncertain years, than rashly to venture upon such a practice, whose pretended and doubtful advantages bear no proportion at all to the infinite and extreme hazard of an endless state of torment.

II. Suppose you could by any false reasonings persuade your consciences that the act of self-destruction was no sin, yet are you so sure of the present goodness of your state towards God, and that all your other sins are pardoned, that you could plunge yourself this moment into eternity? It is generally under a fit of impatience that persons are tempted to destroy themselves; now is the present frame and temper of your soul, such as is fit to appear in before the great tribunal of heaven? You well know that *as the tree falls, so it must lie, to the north or to the south;* Eccles. xi. 3. *After death judgment immediately succeeds*; Heb. ix. 27. There is no faith and repentance in the grave, nor pardoning grace to be implored when the state of trial is past; *Eccles.* ix. 10. *They that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth;* Isaiah xxxviii. 18. Are you now so sure of your Creator's love, and of your perfect conformity to his laws of judgment? Are you so holy, so innocent, so righteous in yourself, or so certain of your interest in the merits of a Mediator, that you dare rush this moment before the bar of a great and terrible God, and tell him that you are come to have your state determined for all everlasting? If not, be wise and bethink yourself a little; use and improve the delay and opportunity which his grace and providence offers you in this life, for a more effectual securing a better life hereafter.

But if we go a little farther and suppose the action in itself to be criminal, then remember that you send yourself out of this world with the guilt of a wilful criminal action on your conscience; you preclude your own repentance of this sin in this world, and the other world knows no repentance that is available to any good purpose. You

shoot yourself headlong into an eternal state; and are you sure that you shall never repent of it in the long future ages of your existence. But, alas! all that repentance comes too late to relieve you from the dismal effects of your rashness. All the repentance of that invisible world is but the sting of conscience, which will add exquisite pain to your appointed punishment. Surely you should have the most evident and undeniable proofs of the goodness of that action which can never be reversed, and which puts you for ever beyond all possibility of useful repentance.

Give me leave to add in this place, what is the constant doctrine of the Bible and the sense of christians, *viz.* that a wilful sinner dying impenitent cannot be saved. Now if there be no space given for serious reflection and penitence in the case of a self-murderer, what room is there for hope hereafter, except only where the persons are really distracted, and the great God our Judge knows how to distinguish exactly how far every action is influenced by bodily distempers. This is the only hope of surviving friends?

III. Think yet again, what an odium, what scandal and everlasting shame you bring upon your name and character by such a fact. It is a reproach that spreads wide among the kindred of the self-murderer; it descends to his posterity, and follows him through many generations.

It may be observed also, that in the rubric of the church of England, before the burial service, self-murderers are ranked with excommunicated persons; the church has no hope of them as true christians; and as the church denies them christian burial, so the civil government did heretofore appoint that they should be put into the earth with utmost contempt; and this was generally done in some public cross-way, that the shame and infamy might be made known to every passenger; and that this infamy might be lasting, they were ordained to have a stake driven through their dead bodies, which was not to be removed. It is pity this practice has been omitted of late years by the too favourable sentence of their neighbours on the jury, who generally pronounce them distracted; and thus they are excused from this public mark of abhorrence. Perhaps it were much better if this practice were revived again; for since the laws of men cannot punish their persons, therefore their dead bodies should be exposed to just and deserved shame, that so this injury might be laid under all the odium that human power and law can cast upon it, to testify a just abhorrence of the fact, and to deter survivors from the like practice.

IV. Can any man of a generous or kind dispostion think of all the mischief done to his friends and kindred by the destruction of himself, and yet practise it? Think of the public scandal and disgrace that it spreads over the whole family; think of the shame and inward anguish of spirit that it necessarily gives to surviving friends and relatives; what sorrow of heart for the loss of a father, or mother, or brother, a sister, a daughter, or a son, in such a sudden, such a dreadful, and such a shameful manner of death? What terrible perplexity of spirit, what inconsolable vexation of mind, what fears of eternal misery for the soul of the deceased? This gives them a wound beyond what they are able to bear, and sometimes wears out their life in sorrow, and brings them down to the grave. One would think that the injury done to friends and dear relations would be a sufficient bar against it to souls who have any sense of justice, or any pretence to goodness and love. If it be so hard for you to bear a little poverty, shame, sorrow, reproach, *&c.* that you will die rather than bear it, why will you entail these on your kindred, and on those who love you best?

In order to work upon persons that have any compassion for their surviving kindred, it is fit they should know also, that the English law calls a self-murderer *Felo de se*, or a felon to himself, and upon this account the estate and effects of the deceased are forfeited by law, and cannot descend to the relatives, unless it appear that the person who laid violent hands upon himself was distracted. Now, in this case, Bishop Fleetwood finds fault severely with juries, who now-a-days bring in almost all self-murderers distracted, and he desires them to consider, "Whether the constant mitigation of the rigours of the law against self-murderers may not give some encouragement to that practice; and whether the favourable verdict they bring in be always so righteous and so seasonable as they imagine? And since the wisdom of the law intends that the confiscation of estates, the undoing a family, and the shameful burial, shall deter them from these horrible attempts, whether the mercy that defeats all these intentions be not more like to continue than to repress these cruel violences? Were a person sure that his estate would be forfeited, and his effects carried away from his wife, children and family; were he sure that his dead body should be publicly exposed, buried in the highway, and with a stake driven through it as a mark of huge infamy, perhaps he would give way to calmer counsels, and be content to bear a little shame, or pain, or loss, till God saw fit to put an end to all his sufferings by natural means: And therefore an instance or two of such severity as is legal, well and wisely chosen, might prove a greater preservative against these violences, than such a constant and expected mercy as we always find on these occasions: For men have now no fear of laws; and when they have laid aside the fear of God, they go about this business with great readiness, they are sure of favour in this world, and they will venture the other."

V. Think, in the last place, how fatal an influence your example may have to bring death and ruin on others, and that on their immortal souls as well as on their mortal life. Remember what an effect the self-murder of Saul had, when his armour-bearer followed him, and died also by his own sword. And oftentimes where self-murder is practised, it fills the heads of other melancholy and uneasy persons with the same bloody thoughts, and teaches them to enter into the same temptation.

Think then with yourself, "What if I should not only destroy my own soul for ever, but become the dreadful occasion of others destroying their souls, and flinging themselves into the same place of torture? What sharp accents will this add to my anguish of conscience in hell, that I have led others into the same wretchedness without remedy, without hope, and without end? Think and enquire whether every self-murderer who may be influenced hereafter by your example to this impious fact, may not be sent particularly to visit your ghost in those invisible regions, and become a new tormentor. Whether all such future events may not be turned by the just judgment of God to encrease your agonies and horrors of soul in that world of despair and misery.

SECTION III.

THE PRETENCES FOR SELF-MURDER, AND THE MOTIVES TO IT EXAMINED AND ANSWERED.

Some of the pretences for this criminal practice have been obviated already, while we were displaying the guilt, the folly, and the danger of it: Let us now come to consider the rest of the chief motives wherewith this temptation is enforced: And here we shall

see what mere shadows most of them are, what poor thin colours of argument, such as one would think should never pass upon a creature who retains the exercise of his reason, and pretends to any share of understanding or forethought, since the infinite concerns of an eternal futurity so vastly overbalance all present appearances.

I. One person finds his circumstances sinking in the world, or, it may be, he is overwhelmed at once with the loss of his estate; "I cannot bear," saith he, "the thoughts of poverty. What! to be brought to a morsel of bread, and live like a beggar! I had rather die than be beholden to charity to keep me alive."

Answer. This is the pride of thy spirit, O man; but is it not incomparably better to mortify this pride, and submit to the will and providence of thy Creator for a few days here on earth, in a state of trial, than to plunge thyself into a state of certain and everlasting wretchedness!

Perhaps it will be replied, "but I am in starving circumstances, I am afraid I shall perish with want, why may I not then hasten my dismission from this world, and prevent my fears?"

I answer, whatever fears are prevented by this rash and bloody experiment, your real and more dreadful sorrows will be hastened. You want the supports of life here, but will you therefore send yourself into a world of universal want and sorrow, where you shall have no supply, where your necessities of various and unknown kinds shall be ever raging and violent, and where you shall obtain no manner of relief, no, not a drop of water to cool your tongue in the midst of torments?

Besides, I think there are no persons in such a condition in our nation, but that either by the laws of the land, or by a proper application to persons of beneficence, they may find relief from starving, if they are but sincerely willing to labour as far as their capacity admits, and then apply themselves to proper methods and to proper persons, in order to obtain this relief. The providence of God corresponds with his promises, Psalm xxxiv. 10. *Though the lions roar and suffer hunger, yet they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing* that is necessary for them; Psalm xxxiii. 18, 19. *The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy, to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine;* Psalm xxxvii. 3. *Trust in the Lord, and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.*

II. Another will say, "I have lived in some credit and reputation in the world, and I am now falling into universal disgrace and infamy, and, in my opinion, shame is worse than death."

Answer. But is shame worse than hell too? That is a proud spirit indeed, that had rather commit the greatest sin against God, than undergo disgrace from men: That had rather venture the weight of the arm of God, in a way of vengeance, than a little noisy and scornful breath of poor perishing mortals. Mortify thy pride, O sinner, and the temptation is at an end; or despise the shame, if it be undeserved.

But perhaps thou hast committed some foul and shameful sin, and thou art afraid of punishment and disgrace together, and therefore thou fliest to the sword, or the halter, to a pond of water, or to poison, to secure thyself from that disgrace.

Wretched reasoning this, and foolish hope! What is there casts a greater blot upon the name of any man, so long as his memory lives in the world, than to say, he hanged or drowned, he poisoned or stabbed himself? This is a stain shall never be wiped away: And when thou risest out of thy grave, at the last day, thou shalt arise to everlasting

shame and contempt. Besides all thy other sins, this shall be published before angels and men, that thou wert guilty of the most unnatural wickedness in the world. What a senseless practice is it for men to bring upon themselves eternal shame and confusion only for this end, that they may escape what is temporal?

III. The third pretence is this: "I have been disappointed in the greatest and most important affairs of life. When my hopes rose highest, they were blasted on a sudden, and quite destroyed. My heart was entirely set upon this blessing, my expectations are dashed, and my heart is broke. All the world besides is insignificant emptiness, or a painful vexation to me; and what should I do any longer in such a world, where I meet with nothing but vexation and emptiness:"

Answer. And do you not know that vanity and vexation has been written upon all this world, by the wisest of men, long before you were born? Has not this lesson been taught most men by sad experience in every age? And must you resolve to die because you have learned it? Have not the most flourishing hopes of a thousand other persons been blasted as well as yours, and the fairest blessings of life withered in their hands? And yet the wise and the foolish have survived this loss: What a poor reason is this for you to doom yourself to death, and make yourself your own executioner? Are there no comforts, no friends, no hopes left in this world to support you under the present disquietude and pain of mind? Will not time and patience make that burden easy which now seems insupportable? Patience and time, with their soft and gentle hand, have applied medicines to a thousand broken hearts and healed them. Is your wound incurable? Is there no balm on earth, and no physician in heaven?

Suppose there is a huge vacancy made in your soul by some great and surprising loss, turn your thoughts to that great and almighty God, in whose hands are all the springs of life, and all the blessings of time and eternity: He can fill up that huge vacancy with better blessings, and with his own presence. This shall make your loss grow lighter, and set your soul at ease. He can wean your heart from every creature by uniting it more nearly to himself. And since you have acted foolishly in setting up a creature in the room of God, he can set up himself as chief in your heart in the room of that idol creature: And you shall be able to say, "God is my all, what have I to do any more with idols?" By the wondrous methods of his wisdom and providence, he can make your losses turn to your advantage; and instead of hopes or enjoyments that have forsaken and disappointed you, he can give you an interest in his promises, his holy covenant in the riches of his grace, and the inheritance of his glory. These are hopes which will never fail; these are enjoyments which will never vanish, or leave you empty and disappointed. And besides all this, he has all the stores of nature in his hand, and all the comforts of life: He can furnish you with blessings in this world, that may in some measure answer the losses which you mourn, or turn the stream of your thoughts into such a peaceful channel as shall make you forget your sorrows.

Thus much to relieve and support the mourner. But give me leave to reason with you in a more awful manner against the temptation which at present you seem to indulge.

What if you have lost every thing that is desirable on earth, and that without hope of reparation, will you resolve therefore to lose heaven too? Is this world become painful to you, and can you find at present no comforts to be enjoyed in it, and will you therefore throw yourself headlong into a world of eternal pain, where comfort can never come, nor

any shadow of pleasure, where there is no rest, no peace, no hope, through all the ages of immortality? Are you disappointed in your dreams of happiness in a creature, and will you therefore abandon your hope in God? Will you profanely say, "he shall not be my happiness?" Will the everlasting wrath of God, the anguish of conscience, and the rage of devils in another world, heal that heart which was broken in this? What monstrous folly and absurdity appears in such pretences! A strange way of relieving ourselves under the loss of a temporal blessing, to plunge into the ocean of eternal misery, and fly into that world which is under the unchangeable curse of God?

IV. "But my temptation is yet greater still," says another person who is contriving to destroy himself; "my circumstances are such, that I shall only prolong a life of misery, and pass through a lingering death of greater pain and torment, unless I anticipate the hour, and put an end to my life at once, in an easier and shorter way. I am in captivity or in prison, and sentenced to a dreadful execution; or I am languishing out my life in extreme torments of body, the gout or the stone; or my limbs are broken, and I have no hope of ease or healing, why should I not then cut short my life and my anguish together?"

Answer. Think what instances of the same kind may be found in scripture, what their various characters were, and what their practice. Bloody Saul will die by his own hand rather than that the Philistines should slay him; 1 *Sam.* xxxi. 4. Ahithophel was afraid of being taken and executed for his treason, and therefore he hanged himself; 2 *Sam.* xvii. 23. When Zimri, a wicked king, saw that the city was taken, and that he must fall into the hands of his enemies, he burned the king's house over him and died; 1 *Kings* xvi. 18. The heathen jailer, fearing his prisoners had escaped, drew his sword, and would have killed himself, lest he should be put to death in the room of his prisoners; *Acts* xvi. 27. These are the men that have chosen sin rather than affliction: They would destroy themselves rather than stay for other men to do it. Are these fit precedents for a christian to follow? Art thou fond of imitating these examples, whose names and characters are loaded with divine contempt in the book of God, except only the jailer, who was prevented by divine mercy from the bloody fact, and became afterwards a penitent and a convert to the christian faith.

On the other hand, think of the holy prophets and martyrs, who had the most dreadful sufferings in view, and rather trusted to divine grace for their support under them, than they would indulge such a guilty method of escape; and their names are crowned with honour on earth and in heaven. Job was a very monument of misery, had lost his estate and his children and all his comforts; he was smitten with sore boils from head to foot, so that "his soul, that is, his natural inclination, chose strangling and death rather than life;" *Job* vii. 15. and his wife became an instrument of Satan, and bid him *curse God and die*; Job ii. 9. yet he resisted all these temptations through the victorious grace of God, he survived all his sorrows, he became a most honourable monument of divine mercy, and a glorious example of patience.

Whatsoever thy condition be, it is better to trust thyself in the hands of divine mercy, in a way of duty here on earth, than to rush into the hands of God's avenging justice in hell, in order to escape any of the terrors of this life. Matt. x. 28 *Fear not them who can kill the body and can do no more; but fear him who can destroy both body and soul in hell fire.*

Besides, though thou seest no way open for thy relief, yet the infinite wisdom of God may open a door of escape. He can heal the most deplorable maladies of the flesh; he

can give ease to the acutest pains; he can change thy captive and forlorn estate into peace, liberty and joy. Remember the history of Job; consider the patience of that holy man, and the happy end of his sufferings through the goodness of the Lord. Art thou in the hands of bloody men? the great God has a thousand ways to rescue thee. He can change the purposes of men, and the nature of savage beasts, though they gape to devour thee, though they seem resolved and bent upon cruelty and violence. Remember Daniel in the lions' den. Remember also the deliverance of St. Paul and St. Peter out of prison. He can give thee a dismission from life with his own hand, and prevent thy fears and the rage of men, or he can arm thy soul with divine courage and strength, to bear up under the sharpest agonies, and to glorify him even in the fires? And surely the hope of such a death in the certain favour of God, is infinitely to be preferred before a death procured to ourselves, and under a divine curse.

V. "Distress of soul through surrounding sorrows within and without, the departure of God, the agonies of conscience, and the fears of eternal damnation; these things become the spring of many a temptation to self-murder." Saul was under some such sort of distress when God was departed from him, and the Philistines were coming upon him: He refused to eat bread all that day and all night; and as he stabbed himself the next day, so some suppose he would have starved himself the day before; 1 *Sam.* xxviii. 15, 20, 22, 23. Judas was in horrible distress of conscience when he had betrayed our Lord, and then he betakes himself to the halter. *I have sinned*, says he, *and betrayed innocent blood;* Matt. xxvii. 4, 5. I cannot bear my own thoughts, and I will die by my own hands. And when inward and outward troubles meet together, as they often do, Satan takes the advantage to propose this dreadful experiment for relief. "I am a poor reprobate creature, for God has left me," says a person under temptation, "and I am sure I shall never be saved: I cannot bear the anguish of my own mind, I cannot bear to live: And besides, if I destroy myself now, I shall have fewer sins to answer for than if I lived longer, and thus my guilt and punishment will be less."

Answer. But how knowest thou that God has utterly left thee, and that thou shalt never be saved? It is not God but Satan who tells thee thou art a reprobate. The God of heaven says no such thing to thee, but he calls thee to look unto him from the ends of the earth, from the borders of hell and despair, that thou mayest be saved; *Isaiah* xlv. 22. Wilt thou plunge thyself into certain destruction, and make thy damnation sure, which is not certain, whilst thou art here in this life, for amongst the living there is hope? The Son of God stands ready to receive the worst of sinners to the arms of his mercy, *The blood of Christ can cleanse from all sin;* 1 John i. 7, 9. *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came to save the chief of sinners;* 1 Tim. i. 15. And none who ever came to him has been or shall be cast out; *Job* vi. 37. Why wilt thou seal and confirm for ever the sentence of thy own condemnation? Why wilt thou reject the condescending grace of the Saviour, who delights to relieve the distressed sinner? Art thou so rash and desperately wicked, as to employ thy last moments and thy latest powers in this world, to commit a bold and horrid sin against the God of all grace, to preclude thy own repentance, and forbid the Son of God to save thee?

Besides, This is not true that thy punishment will be the less if thou destroy thyself. For damnation and punishment in hell will be the greater and deeper, according to the aggravations of the sins which have brought the sinner thither: Now self-murder is

a sin so heinous and aggravated, that if thou die impenitently under the guilt of it, thy damnation will doubtless be the greater for it, and thy torments the more intolerable.

It is a vain and deceitful hope that some persons may have indulged under such a temptation, *viz.* "That God will not impute sin to them in this matter, because their anguish of mind is so great; and that if it be a crime, they will pray for the pardon of it before they commit it." This is a mere vain delusion of the tempter. Canst thou ever imagine that God will hear such prayers? David was of another mind, Psalm lxvi. 18. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.* If thou comest before God with bloody resolutions in thy heart, God will not accept of thy petitions. Isaiah i. 15. *When you make many prayers I will not hear; your hands are full of blood.* The prayer for pardon of a wilful intended sin, before it is committed, is a most flagrant and complicated piece of folly and impiety, and can never find access even to a throne of grace.

VI. The last pretence I shall mention for the practice of self-murder is this: Some poor melancholy creature may say, "I am so hurried with vile, wicked, blasphemous thoughts, that my life is a burden to me, and I would fain be rid of it. I am surrounded and overwhelmed night and day with such a crowd and tumult of distracting fears and dismal imaginations, that I can hardly get a moment's rest. My soul longs to be quit of this body, and free from the impetuous and never-ceasing assault of vexing and disquieting thoughts." Or perhaps the soul complains thus: "I am importuned with the endless buzz and clamour of diabolical suggestions to put an end to my life; almost every thing I see is proposed to me as an instrument of self-destruction, and I fear I shall not be able always to resist; sometimes I am tempted to believe if I would but once comply, I should sleep in silence, and there would be an end of these disquietudes."

Answer. This is a dangerous form of the temptation: When the natural humours of the body are ruffled by any disease, the great enemy of the soul is swift to make his advantage of it. When the brain is disturbed almost to a degree of distraction, the mind has not a full power over its own thoughts, resolutions and conduct. But let such a one consider, that whether these hurrying wicked thoughts may arise from the disorders of the body or from Satan, while thou mournest, hatest, and resistest them, they shall not be laid to thy charge: But when they are knowingly and willingly indulged, they bring great guilt on the soul: And if they are once complied with, and put in practice, the guilt is highly aggravated, and perhaps no space left for actual repentance, nor grace to practise it.

It is better, infinitely better, to fight and wrestle against these hurries of mind, by dwelling upon some sacred sentences of the word of God. It is incomparably preferable to bear the fatigue of this combat, to strive against the tempter every moment with all thy powers and with perpetual prayers, to renounce these suggestions with the utmost abhorrence, and with equal vehemence to resist such vehement assaults as these. Think this with thyself, poor distressed creature, that if thou yield to the bloody temptation, and send thy soul at once into those regions of darkness, there unclean spirits shall have more complete power over thee, there every devil shall insult thee as a sentenced criminal, and that with double fury and with juster pretences. There thou wilt find the stroke of thy own murder to be so far from being a means of relief and silent rest, that it will but plunge thee into agonies of the same kind, much more terrible, and without hope of relief. Thou art sensible these are the suggestions of the wicked spirit; for that reason therefore

abandon, abhor, detest them, and by the grace of God maintain a perpetual opposition till he give thee complete victory. The conflict cannot be very long, the crown and triumph are eternal. God will not always suffer the adversary to contend thus with thee, lest thy spirit should fail before him, and the soul which he has made be lost for ever.

SECTION IV.

MEANS OF SECURITY AGAINST THIS TEMPTATION, OR ADVICES TO THE TEMPTED.

Thus I am led on to the next enquiry, and that is, "What course should we take to secure ourselves against this bloody temptation, and by what means may we most successfully resist and vanquish the great destroyer in such assaults as these?

I. Advice. Maintain upon your spirit a constant sense of the crying sin of murder. The voice of blood cries to the Lord for vengeance, whoever sheds it. Have a care of indulging a favourable thought of self-murder; look upon it always with an eye of abhorrence, as an unnatural and abominable iniquity, and as one of the most wretched and hopeless practices that a man can be guilty of. Let the terrors of God, which set themselves in array against this bloody crime, be set before your minds whensoever this temptation assaults you.

Give me leave here to borrow a page or two from a sermon preached long ago on this subject by the late venerable Doctor Increase Mather, of New England, whence also I have derived some other sentiments in this discourse. "It is an evil thing," says he, "to speak favourably either of self-murder or of self-murderers. There have been those that have undertaken an unhappy work, to justify self-murder in some cases. Pagan writers have celebrated persons who murdered themselves: Famous is the story of Lucretia, who stabbed herself to secure her chastity. In what we call the second book of the Maccabees, we find celebrated an action of one Rasis, for which the Jews cry him up as a martyr; but Austin censures him for a criminal self-murderer, with reasons that cannot be answered.

"Yea, some christians have commended those who, to save their chastity, and so themselves from disgrace, have destroyed their own lives. And the crying up of such a fact, has given occasion to many others to become guilty of that unnatural sin.

"To exalt the persons of self-murderers to heaven is an evil and a dangerous practice. We should rather leave secret things to God, and to the discoveries of the great day. Indeed if a man's life and conversation were as becomes the gospel, we are not positively and absolutely to say that he is damned, though he killed himself; because we know not but that he might be at that time under the power of distraction: And it is not impossible but that God may suffer Satan to possess, and torment, and kill the bodies of some, whose souls may yet be saved in the day of the Lord. Yet, on the other hand, if there were no sign of distraction appearing in persons before they went to destroy themselves, nor any evidence of repentance after such attempts, we should not say such persons are gone to heaven, lest, by being over-charitable to the dead, we become cruel to the living. The asserting that such persons are saved, may occasion and encourage others to do the like, and the everlasting destruction of bodies and souls follow upon it."

II. Advice. Maintain the universal practice of piety, and of every moral virtue. Such

temptations to self-murder frequently arise from some indulged iniquity. Men oftentimes run headlong into death, with a design to deliver themselves from some of the natural consequences of their own crimes in this world. Now it is easier far to watch against those notorious crimes, and to avoid those follies, than when they are committed to guard our minds against the wicked suggestions that may arise. "A man in innocence," says a great writer, "has a mighty command over himself, above what he has when guilt and fear, shame, vexation and remorse, have taken a full possession of him, have bewildered his thoughts, scattered his recollection, and enfeebled his judgment."

Be just in your dealings with men, be sober and temperate in all your personal conduct. Do not indulge yourself in any unlawful and unblessed practices to swell and enlarge your estate, such as gaming or cheating. Do not run into any extravagancies of life, which may waste your estate or your health, or make inroads upon your reason. A thief, a cheat, and a gamester, a covetous miser and a spendthrift, a glutton and a drunkard, lie much exposed to such wicked suggestions of self-murder in an evil hour.

Watch against all enticements to luxury and lewdness. Remember that riot and adultery, and midnight scenes of debauch, often lead the way to blood. Secret uncleanness is the frequent spring of murder; and that not only of the unlawful offspring, but of the criminal parent too, and that by their own hands. The wanton person cannot bear the just and public shame of his private iniquities, and he plunges himself headlong into hell and the grave, in hopes to cover his head from scandal and the daylight.

Love not any thing in this world so much, as that the loss of it should throw you quite off your guard, and make you abandon yourself to wild and extravagant methods of relief. Let your affections be so subdued, and kept in so good order, that the common calamities of life may not utterly confound, though they may surprise you. If you place your whole happiness in any of the attainments of this world, you expose yourselves to this bloody temptation when you suffer the loss of those idols.

Set a strict guard upon all the ruffling and disquieting passions of human nature. Avoid envy, resentment, indignation, revenge, fretfulness and vexation of spirit. These often lead the unhappy mind of man into this temptation. Persons who break out into violent passion without check or controul, and give a loose to the wild and unreasonable disquietudes both of animal nature and of the mind, they expose themselves to be made the instruments of the devil in their own destruction, or perhaps to destroy themselves without any fresh influences from the tempter. Learn the practice of meekness, and maintain a strict hand over your sudden risings of resentment. The man of rage is always near to bloody practices: The same sort of passions which excite a person to give an unhappy and murderous wound to his neighbour, may some time or other most unhappily imbrue his hands in his own blood.

Remember this, that it has scarce ever been known that a man of temperance, sobriety and virtue, and who in the general course of his life has kept his lusts and passions under due restraint, has been much assaulted with this temptation to self-murder, except only in cases of great bodily disorders, of prevailing melancholy, and the loss of reason.

The third direction I shall copy from Doctor Mather.

III. Advice. "Beware of such sins as may provoke the holy and righteous God to lead thee unto this horrid evil.

"Beware of pride. When men will rather not be at all, than be what God would have them be, what cursed pride is that, and how dangerous a step towards this sin? This

produces murmurings at the providence of God, and causes people to say, 2 Kings vi. 33. *What should I wait for the Lord any longer?*

" Beware of self-confidence. Be sensible of thy weakness; 1 Cor. x. 12. *Let him that stands take heed lest he fall.* Be not confident of thy own strength to encounter the adversary. If God should let Satan loose upon thee, he will be too hard for thee.

" Beware of a heart glued to the world. When the world is a man's idol, he will rather part with his life, with his own hands he will give it away, rather than part with the world, and be content to live in poverty.

" Beware of unbelief. Distrust not the fatherly care of thy heavenly Father." The dread of poverty and starving has been sometimes the cause of self-destruction; but it is the effect of distrust in God.

" Beware of despair; 1 Thess. v. 8. *Putting on for a helmet the hope of salvation.* Say not, the day of grace is over with me. Say not, I have sinned unpardonably! Vain imaginations.

" Beware of the more heinous crimes, which are in a special manner God-provoking evils. The sins against nature are so. Some that have been guilty of such sins in secret, and have not repented of them, God has for such things left them to this, which is a sin against nature too!

" There are other atrocious crimes, whereof this has been the consequence. Judas and Pilate are two fearful examples of it!" The sacred history informs us of the tragical end of Judas, and the histories of the church tell us, that Pilate also destroyed himself some years afterwards at Lyons in France.

" Finally, Beware of backslidings from God, and from good beginnings in religion. Remember that word, Hosea viii. 3. *He hath cast off the thing that is good; the enemy shall pursue him.* Some have left off prayer in their families; left off their attendance on sermons; left off godly exercises which they have been used to perform. Therefore the enemy of their souls is let loose upon them, and he pursues them even to self-destruction."

IV. Advice. Suffer not yourself to dwell too much alone. Do not indulge solitude and retirement beyond the time that is actually employed in devotion: Nor let your appointed seasons of retired devotion be long. In such a case short and frequent worship is best. Lonesome hours and melancholy solitudes, if they are too much indulged, do not only allow the devil an opportunity to pursue his temptations with vigour, but furnish the bewildered soul with means and instruments of death. Whensoever therefore you are alone, you should be with God.

For the same reason should a person under this temptation avoid all waters, precipices, dangerous places, the use of weapons, &c. and remove every thing as far as may be from his sight that may supply him with the means of self-destruction.

V. Advice. As far as possible, endeavour to be always employed; that the powers of your nature, both soul and body, may be engaged in some proper business. Be always doing something, if it be but a mere amusement, a diversion for the thoughts: This is far preferable to idleness. When the hand and the mind have nothing to do, the devil seizes such an opportunity to employ them both for his own wicked purposes.

Do not make the alehouse or the tavern a refuge from your sorrows, but rather drive out your uneasy thoughts by some proper business that may employ them. A sober glass or two may be used to refresh animal nature, and revive a sinking spirit at some

particular seasons; but if you once begin to make strong liquors your daily and constant relief, you will be led hereby into a train of mischiefs. When you have drunk a little too freely, and your thoughts grow a little confused, you stand then most dreadfully exposed to all the evil impressions of the tempter. Those who may have vanquished huge temptations, while they have been temperate and sober, have been fatally betrayed into the deadly snare by wine and strong drink. A loose, intemperate, and unguarded hour, has become an hour of blood and death.

VI. Advice. Keep not the devil's counsel, but discover his temptations. It is by no means proper, indeed, to publish them to the world, but let them be made known to some faithful minister, or to some wise and judicious christian. This will go a great way to break the snare. Entreat the assistance, the advice and prayers of one or two intimate religious friends for you: This method, I am persuaded, has been effectual to prevent the execution of such horrid purposes. Dr. Mather informs us, that one who cut his own throat acknowledged this before his expiration: "O that I had told," said he, "how I was tempted! if I had, I believe I should never come to this."

VII. Advice. *Resist the devil and he will flee from you;* James iv. 7. This is a divine counsel. Maintain a perpetual conflict with him, and a vigorous opposition. Suffer not yourself in a melancholy season to hold a parley with the tempter, or rather suffer him not to plead and dispute with you, but abandon, and renounce, and abhor all his suggestions. Let him not have the honour or the advantage of arguing with you upon so dangerous a subject, in a gloomy and melancholy hour.

Let your memory be well stored with proper scriptures, and employ the word of God in resisting the devil. This was the practice of Luther, under his great and sore temptations. This has been the successful instrument of defence for all the saints: And this sword of the Spirit will put Satan to flight. Jesus, the captain of our salvation, has given us himself for a glorious example; he defeated the tempter in all his assaults with these words, *It is written;* Matt. iv. 4, 7, 10.

And I would give this word of advice to tempted souls, that they every day take some particular useful text of scripture into their minds, that they may run to it perpetually as a refuge, and dwell upon it with a resolute constancy in the midst of their hurries of mind; as a sailor, in the midst of a storm, ties himself on to the mast, that he may not be driven off into the sea by the violence of the winds and the waves. Some divine word of promise in such a dark and dismal day, will be as a sacred anchor of hope to the poor weather-beaten spirit, that is tossed to and fro upon the billows of this temptation.

VIII. Advice. But, after all, the most effectual and successful relief under this temptation is faith and prayer. Be frequent and importunate in prayer to God. Fly to the throne of grace whensoever you are assaulted, *that you may obtain mercy, and find grace to help you in this time of need;* Heb. iv. 16. Entreat the aids of your Creator against his and your enemy. Trust in his mercy, and seek his power to resist the tempter; the holy Spirit of God is superior to all the spirits of hell: Depend on his aid, and thus by faith and prayer quench the fiery darts of the evil one.

Commit thyself afresh, by earnest requests, to the protection of the Son of God; he is almighty and compassionate, and the appointed guardian of tempted souls; being sheltered by faith in the hands of the Saviour, Satan shall not pluck thee out of his hands. Christ has conquered the adversary, and led him captive in his chains, nor can

he stir beyond the limits of his permission. If the enemy pursue thee, make haste and betake thee to Jesus as to a city of refuge; his name Jesus assures us that he is and will be a Saviour: *This name of the Lord is a strong tower, the* tempted soul flies to it *and finds safety;* Prov. xviii. 10. *They that have known this name, will put their trust therein;* Psalm ix. 10.

Remember, O poor tempted souls! that our Lord Jesus Christ has been tempted himself; and that in the same manner too, on the pinnacle of the temple, he knows how to succour them that are tempted; *Heb.* ii. 18. He can teach you how to put Satan to flight.

Beg that the Lord your Saviour would secure you from the hurries of your own thoughts: run to his protection hourly, being conscious of your own weakness. Plead with him to keep you from this unreasonable and comprehensive temptation, that aims at the ruin of soul and body at once; and though you may think it long to wait and pray under such a sore conflict, yet resolve to continue at the mercy-seat, and go on praying and waiting: *The needy and distressed soul shall not always be forgotten; the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever;* Psalm ix. 18. In the proper and appointed time, the Lord will awake for your deliverance, and give you a glorious victory. The Shepherd of Israel may permit a beloved sheep to be worried by the roaring lion, but the sheep that keeps near to the Great Shepherd, shall not be given up to the mouth of the destroyer.

These are the chief advices of a spiritual or intellectual kind, which at present occur to my thoughts, and which I have here proposed to the reason and conscience of men, as proper means to secure them from the dangerous and dreadful practice of self-murder: And I am well assured, that if such counsels as these had been followed, we should not have heard of such frequent and bloody instances of persons, in the full exercise of reason, putting an end to their own lives, as our weekly newspapers inform us of.

But it must be confessed, that where this temptation dwells upon the mind, and hangs heavy upon the spirits, where the soul is vexed and hurried with it from day to day, or where there is a melancholy temper of spirit, indulging gloomy apprehensions both of things present and things to come, there is much ground to suspect that reason is clouded, that the humours of the body are discomposed, and that animal nature is under the power of some distemper. In this case, all the directions that are applied to reason and conscience, are likely to become useless and ineffectual, without the skill of the physician, and the application of proper medicines to correct the peccant humours of the body. Friends and kindred, and those which dwell in the same house, should make wise observations, where they suspect a person to labour under the power of such a malady, or to indulge such a temptation; for many times they are better judges than the person who is thus afflicted and tempted.

And while they are using proper remedies to remove the disorders of nature, they may also take seasonable hours to set before the mind of a melancholy creature such considerations, drawn out of the several parts of this little treatise, as are most suitable to the present case: Let them join their hearty prayers together with all the friendly methods of treatment, to soften and relieve their distress of spirit: No harsh or severe usage from their friends is proper in this case: Bind up the broken-hearted, and comfort them, that they may not be unwilling to live. Make every thing easy round about them in this world, and encourage them to hope in the mercies of God for eternal life, if they do not

wilfully fling themselves out of the reach of his covenant, and of all the appointed methods of his pardoning love. Treat them gently with all the united influences of advice and medicine. By daily prayer commit them to the healing power and the saving mercy of that God, in whose hands are all the springs of nature and grace. And may the God of all grace condescend to hear and to deliver the lives of the tempted from such a dismal period! May he rescue them, by his mercy, from the power of the tempter, that they may not plunge their souls into an eternal and unchangeable state at so dreadful an uncertainty! Dreadful indeed, wherein their surviving relatives can find but little room for comfort or hope concerning them, except what arises from the supposition of their loss of reason.

SECTION V.

ADMONITIONS TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN RESCUED FROM THIS TEMPTATION.

We have good reason to believe, that there are multitudes in every age, who in some season of their lives have been assaulted with this temptation, and have been delivered from the power of it by some interposing methods of divine providence or special grace. Surely such persons will be ready to receive a word of admonition how to behave themselves, after so merciful an escape from death and hell.

I. Admonition. Think sometimes with yourselves, how nigh you have been to the borders of the pit, and what rich grace preserved you from plunging into destruction. Think how dreadfully near you were to death, and to the regions of eternal sorrow, and what an arm of almighty mercy hath rescued you. Say thus to yourselves, "I who now behold the light of this world, and am in the land of hope, might have been roaring out under agonies of spirit in the land of darkness and despair, if the great and blessed God had not prevented it."

Perhaps your conscience was awakened, and the temptation broken, before it prevailed so far as to fix the fatal resolve of your own death, or when you were nearest to it, opportunity was wanting. Perhaps there was some person came happily into the room at the time of your bloody purpose, or you were not then furnished with some proper instrument of death: Perhaps you were prevented from finishing the fatal stroke when you had begun it, or the murderous attempt of your hands was not so strong and so successful as your wretched heart wished and designed it: Perhaps your heart relented as you were just going to give death to yourselves; or some sudden turn of thought, some happy word of scripture was brought into your mind, that forbid the mischief, and rescued your soul. Let the method of prevention be what it will, it is certain God was there, divine providence was there, divine mercy was there; Psalm lxviii. 20. *Our God is the God of salvation: To God the Lord belong all the issues* or escapes *from death.* Stand, therefore, and wonder at the riches of divine grace, and give God the glory of thy rescue from the arms of death, and the flames of hell. Amongst thy solemn thanksgivings for received mercies, recount this illustrious instance of it. With great humility fall down before the throne of God, and with thy warmest devotions and gratitude appear there at his foot, as an humble monument of his surprising kindness. Remember, the nearer thou wert to destruction, the greater and more evident

is the mercy of thy deliverance. "Let thy soul, and all that is within thee, join to praise the name of the Lord, thy deliverer;" *Psalm* ciii. 1, 2.

II. Take shame to yourself in the sight of God for every murderous thought, every degree of compliance with this temptation. Repent deeply, O sinner, if thou hast indulged any bloody purpose in thy heart, and cry for divine forgiveness. Confess thy sin at the mercy-seat, and seek pardon through the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God. Remember, that the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin, even from the crimes of murder and blood. God has snatched thee from the mischief of thy own hands, lift up those hands to heaven to implore pardoning grace in the name of Jesus the great reconciler: Repent, and receive the blessing.

III. Meditate on the long train of benefits derived from this deliverance, and survey the weighty obligations that are laid on your soul thereby. Say thus to yourselves, "Every hour of rest and peace that I enjoy is the effect of this peculiar mercy, this divine rescue from death. Every sermon that I hear, every season of grace that is afforded me, is a special favour from that God who delivered me from this destruction. Every opportunity that I have of bending my knees before the throne of grace, every comfortable promise that I read in the gospel, every beam of mercy that I see, and every word of hope that I hear, are all owing to that happy hour of my escape from the violence of my own hands. Wretch that I was! I was cutting off all my hopes, I was cancelling my name out of all the promises, and putting myself beyond the reach of them all. I was sending myself into a world where there is no gospel, no promises, no prayer, no word of salvation, no beam of mercy. For ever adored be the compassion of my God, that overruled all my wicked thoughts, and at last gave me victory over this dreadful temptation! And blessed of the Lord be those relatives, those friends, that were the happy instruments in the hand of God to break this fatal snare!"

Then think of the weighty obligations that lie on you to love and serve the Lord with all your powers. Say, *What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits?* Psalm cxvi. 14. "He hath delivered me from the gates of the grave when I was just ready to leap into it, while the gates of hell stood open to receive my soul. He is indeed the God of my life, for he has not only given me life at first, and preserved it by the common bounty of his providence, but he has rescued my life out of the hands of the tempter, when he would have persuaded me to destroy it. Oh! may every moment of this rescued life be some way or other devoted to his fear and honour! Lord, what wilt thou have me do, to make it manifest that I am entirely thine? I would fain shew to my friends who were acquainted with my dreadful danger, that the vows and the bonds of God are strong upon me, and that this deliverance was not bestowed on me in vain."

IV. At some special seasons, make an enquiry what you have done for God, or for the welfare of your own soul since your deliverance. In the successive course of time, when a new year begins, or when you take notice of your returning birthday, or when the annual season of this deliverance returns, which is like another birthday, or a new beginning of life, ask your conscience this solemn question, "Have I improved my moments and my mercies answerable to the infinite obligations I lie under?" It may be, you had done little for the honour of God in the world before that time: What have you done since? It may be, you had never been diligent to make your calling and election sure before: And are they now made sure? Enquire of your own souls and say, "Some months or years are past since the Lord has recovered me from the most pernicious

snare of the tempter, and do I still continue his slave in another form, bound in the chains of my own lusts and passions? Surely I was at that time very unfit to die; have I now attained a greater fitness?"

Perhaps you had then acquired but little acquaintance with the grace of Christ, with experimental religion and practical godliness: And are you still a stranger to Christ, a stranger to the pleasure of secret religion, and to holiness in the power and life of it? You stood in that day on the very borders of hell and destruction, the God of mercy secured you from the pit: Is your face now set heavenward? And are you arrived within the hopes and confines of heaven? Have you any comfortable or settled expectation of that inheritance of the saints in light? Your mind perhaps was vain and carnal, and made the pleasures, the profits, or the honours of this life the objects of your chief pursuit, and your only happiness; how stands the temper of your spirit now? Is it refined? Is it exalted to pursue diviner interests and hopes? Or think you that God rescued you from the grave, for no other purpose but to eat and drink, and live a brutal life, to grovel in the mire still, and to feed upon the dust, or follow after the wind? God has withheld you from executing the devil's sentence of death on yourself: And are you content still to live under the guilt and condemnation of sin in the sight of God, and wait only till his providence execute his divine sentence upon you? Is this, O sinner, is this all the design for which thy reprieve was given thee? Was it not that thou mightest seek a complete pardon, and obtain a right to heaven through the grace of the gospel? And wilt thou go on to abuse the compassion and the long-suffering of God? Shall that soul perish at last, which has had so loud a warning, and which has been rescued from the very jaws of the pit by the hand of divine love.

Or, it may be, thou hadst made a profession of religion long before the season of thy temptation, and thou hadst backslidden from the Lord, days without number. His hand has saved thee from present death; but is thy soul recovered from its great backslidings? One would think it should be a very awakening hour, when thou wert just within the verge of hell, and plucked as a brand out of the burning: Art thou returned to thy old drowsiness, and fallen asleep again in careless security? How wilt thou lift up thy face before God, when he shall make at last a solemn enquiry; "What hast thou done with that life, with those months, with those years? What hast thou done with those sermons and those seasons of grace that I gave thee since the day of thy rescue from thy own bloody purposes, and from the assaults of the tempter?"

V. Search into the causes and springs of this temptation which hath assaulted you, and watch against all those things that have had any tendency toward it, or any share in it.

Search into your own heart, see what secret seeds of iniquity lurk there, which may have grown up to this dangerous height. Read over the second and third advices of the foregoing section, see if any of the vicious practices, or the criminal neglects there mentioned have been indulged by you, which might lay a foundation for this mischief. These are so many avenues, which the adversary hath found to insinuate his wicked suggestions, and convey them to your heart: Watch against all these avenues of that great destroyer, and set a guard on yourself all round from the assaults of the like temptation in time to come.

VI. Since you have found, by dangerous experience, how unsafe you are in your own hands, and that your life and soul are not secure there, commit yourself daily by repeated exercises of faith and importunate prayer into the hands of Christ: His great office and divine employment is to take care of the souls which are committed to him,

and those *who come unto him shall in no wise be cast out;* John vi. 37. The holy apostle *knew whom he had believed,* or trusted in, *and was assured that he was able to keep what he had committed to him against the great day;* 2 Tim. i. 12.

By holy devotions rise often up to heaven: "Dwell in the secret place of the Most High, abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Say to the Lord, be thou my refuge and my fortress, my God, in thee will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler. He shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways. The lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under thy feet. Thou shalt call, and God will answer thee: He will be with thee in trouble, he will deliver and honour thee. With long life he will satisfy thee, and shew thee his salvation;" *Psalm* xci. 1, 2, 3, 11, 13, 15, 16.

Thus join the two excellent advices of our Saviour together, *watch and pray daily, that ye enter not into temptation,* and wait for success from heaven: *May the God of peace sanctify you throughout, and may your spirit, soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ!* 1 Thess. v. 23. *Amen.*

SECTION VI.

CAUTIONS AGAINST ALL APPROACHES TO SELF-MURDER, VIZ. INTEMPERANCE, DUELLING, &c.

IF I were to add any thing to this discourse concerning the sin of self-murder, I think it might not be utterly improper to put in a caveat against those practices which have a tendency to this sin, and which in some measure partake of the guilt of it, though the sinner himself does not intend violence against his own life. Give me leave then to name a few of these practices, which when set in this light, will appear highly criminal, how innocent soever they are esteemed by thoughtless men.

I. The first of this kind that I shall mention is intemperance, and an unguarded indulgence of all the appetites of nature, and the sensualities of the animal life.

Frequent feasting to the full on rich and savoury dishes, gratifying the palate with varieties of high-seasoned food, and loading the stomach with daily excesses, is one way of destroying life.

It was a most just and happy censure that a late ingenious writer casts on the gluttony of a modern meal, as he expresses it: "Would not one of the ancient philosophers think a man mad, had he seen him devour fowl, fish, and flesh; swallow oil and vinegar, wines and spices, throw down sallads of twenty different herbs, sauces of a hundred ingredients, confections and fruits of numberless sweets and flavours? What unnatural motions and counterferments must such a medley of intemperance produce in the body! For my part, when I behold a fashionable table set out in all its magnificence, I fancy that I see gouts and dropsies, fevers and lethargies, with other innumerable distempers lying in ambuscade among the dishes.*

* "Nature," saith this author, "delights in the most plain and simple diet. Were I to consider my readers as my patients, and to prescribe such a kind of temperance as is accommodated to all persons, and such as is particularly suitable to our climate and way of living, I would copy the following rules of a very eminent physician: "Make your whole repast out of one dish. If you indulge in a second, avoid drinking any thing strong till you have finished your meal; at the same time abstain from all such sauces as are not the most plain and simple." A man could not well be guilty of gluttony, if he stuck to these few obvious and easy rules. In the first case, there would be no variety of tastes to solicit his palate, and occasion excess; nor in the second, any artificial provocatives to relieve satiety, and create a false appetite." Thus that great and approved writer, Mr. Addison.

Surely this author would agree, that the indulgence of a riotous appetite in such various and improper food as disturbs and oppresses nature, inflames the blood, and fills the body with distempers, has a plain tendency to self-destruction; and yet how many are there that call themselves christians, who must fall under this accusation, and cannot excuse their guilt? Have we never heard a person say, "I know this dish will make me sick, yet I cannot forbear it? Or, I have frequently found this food or these sauces are hurtful for me, and yet I will venture on them?" There is a common proverb, that charges this sort of sensuality with the guilt of self-murder; such a man digs his grave with his teeth: And though he feels his health languish, and his body sinking toward the dust, yet he goes on to dig his grave with his teeth daily, till at last he tumbles into it. The God of life is the judge of men, and he hath a terrible charge against such wilful transgressors: For intemperance is a slow poison.

It is the same sort of crime when persons get a habit of drinking, and from a cup of strong drink, which might refresh nature, they grow up to quarts and gallons: From a few moderate glasses at first, they learn in time to swallow the contents of whole bottles. They swill wine without measure, and when the common and natural juice of the grape is made so habitual and customary, that it ceases to be strong enough to support their spirits, then they have recourse to brandy, and other intoxicating liquors: The art of the chymist is employed to extract burning spirits out of various materials: These make a fearful waste of the vitals, and destroy all the inward springs of nature and life. Many a poor feeble creature has been deluded into death and the grave by the false and flattering supports which they imagine they had received from their daily drams: Where this custom prevails, it is most pernicious and fatal: The bottle of cordials is perpetually frequented: They want it almost hourly; the stomach is palled, the natural appetite to food is ruined, the pulse continues to beat a few weeks, or a few days, by the force of their beloved liquors; and then they drop into the pit. It is strange that persons should make such haste to their own destruction, especially when friends and physicians around them have given them so many warnings, and would fain call them back from their precipitate and fatal career to the grave!

There are many of the wealthy and polite parts of mankind, and too many of the fairer pieces of human nature, who are betrayed into this snare, and ruined beyond relief, without suspecting the guilt of what they daily practise. All the art of medicine labours in vain to rescue life from the prevailing force of diseases, where the thoughtless patient is perpetually nourishing the disease, and takes part with death against the physician. Their conduct is a medley of inconsistencies; they pray for life, and make no conscience of sinning against their own prayers. Little do those unhappy creatures think how they violate the sixth commandment of the law of God, while they are sipping their deadly potions: And though they are often admonished, yet they will not believe, but go on to drink and die.

And as for the lowest rank of mankind, they send themselves out of the world at all ages in haste by these hot and fiery liquors. Little young wretches are taught the use of drams in the most early parts of life, and begin to destroy their nature betimes. If they survive childhood, they become a sickly race, and useless pieces of the nation. The elder people of that rank reel in our streets till the grave receives them: And unless the venders of these strong liquors be in some measure limited, and their mortal trade restrained, it is certain the churchyards must be enlarged to receive the dead. If a

tombstone could be well afforded for every such sinner, the inscription of it ought to be this; "Here lies a self-murderer."

II. Another instance wherein some persons thoughtlessly approach to the guilt of self-murder, is, that when they feel nature impaired, and distemper growing apace upon them, yet they obstinately refuse the most necessary means of health and recovery.

Some are so passionately engaged in the pursuit of riches or honours, that in opposition to all the warnings of death, which they receive both from their own disorders of body, and the kind admonition of friends, yet they will fatigue their flesh daily, waste their best spirits, and wear out life apace to accomplish their secular designs. Though it often happens, that before they compassed their end they die; their schemes are broken, their projects vanish; and they are gone to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, to give an account how their life was spent, and why they died so soon.

It is granted, indeed, that there may be some loud and plain calls of Providence to risk our health, and even life itself, on some special occasions. And when persons of a lower rank amongst mankind must labour for daily food to support themselves and their families, it is very hard to determine precisely how far they should obey the craving necessities of their household, by exposing themselves to great inconveniences and dangers in their daily labours, or how far they should confine themselves in a medicinal way for the recovery of their strength. In such cases, every man must put all circumstances into the balance, and by seeking divine direction, and consulting his friends, he must determine for himself according to his best prudence: And if death seizes him in the course of his labour and duty, he resigns up his life to Providence, and his soul into the hands of a faithful Creator and Redeemer.

But my designed reproof lies here, *viz.* when it is evident that persons are under no such necessity, and they have no plain call, either from God or men, to waste nature and health at so prodigal a rate, yet they wilfully lavish their strength, and throw away life itself in the pursuit of things that are by no means necessary in their circumstances. This sort of conduct shews that their hearts are set too eagerly upon this world, and they precipitate themselves rashly into eternity by too vehement a desire of the things of time.

There is another way, also, whereby persons may be said to hasten their own death, and that is, when sickness comes upon them, and yet, out of mere humour and obstinacy, they renounce all the aids of medicine. They refuse the friendly touch of the lancet, because they were never let blood in their lives, nor their fathers before them. They will not endure a blister to be raised in the most important case that requires it, for, "I am resolved," say they, "never to be flead alive, but will go to the grave with a whole skin."

Or, perhaps, from the silly squeamishness of a nice imagination, they set themselves against those necessary medicines which are the only visible methods of relief. Like children, they refuse a potion because it is bitter or nauseous; and yet they can neither be bribed nor flattered, as children are, into a self-denial in this case, nor be persuaded by all the force of reason to displease their palates, and save their own lives. Such a humorous conduct will afford their departing souls but small comfort in the reflection; "I went on in a course of resolute sickness and death, because the doses of physic were bitter to the taste, and the methods of health were troublesome and painful."

I know some will be ready to suppose this a needless page in the book, for they can hardly conceive any part of mankind can be so obstinately foolish, as to lose health and life in this manner. I wish there might be no future examples of this kind found in the

world; but what has been, may be: Human nature is like itself, and all these follies of our species have their rounds; the repetition of them is too often seen in every age, though some of my readers may not have happened to meet with them. Such as have been trained up in a humorous niceness from the cradle, who have been indulged in the strength of their wills, and never been taught to think, nor to use their understandings, are in a fair way to remain in a state of childhood all their lives, and to die for want of learning to obey reason.

III. An ambitious pursuit of glory, in such feats of activity and strength as throw life into the most imminent hazard, this is another frequent method of self-destruction.

There are some persons who assume to themselves so much pride and vanity, from the firmness of their constitution, or the agility of limbs, that God their creator has bestowed upon them, that they are fond of gaining public applause upon this account. They enter into foolish contracts, and they lay wild wagers of their strength or swiftness: They impose on themselves most excessive burdens, they labour beyond all their strength, they engage to run or ride most unreasonable stages in a few hours, or endure some incredible hardships and fatigues. Hereby they oftentimes break all their boasted powers of nature, and bring themselves in haste to the grave; and they leave their names behind them upon the lists of folly among the men who have sold their lives for a trifle.

There have been others, who have bound themselves by wagers to more brutal and more guilty follies, and their death hath been highly criminal and unpitied. One has gloried in the prodigious power of his appetite to devour flesh, and the equal capacity of his stomach for the stowage of a most unreasonable load of eatables. Another hath boasted of his ability to drain whole gallons of common liquors dry, or to swill down amazing quantities of stronger drink. Such wretches are only fit to enter the lists with bears or swine. It is a mortal shame to human nature, that such creatures should belong to it, and that any other men should become their rivals. Some of these have died upon the spot, and been made public martyrs to their own madness. Others having their natures overpowered with these extravagances, have languished and sunk down to death by degrees. But I doubt the holy and righteous sentence of God will excuse neither one nor the other of them from the guilt of self-destroyers.

IV. The bloody trade of prize-fighting is another vile practice, wherein the flesh, and limbs, and lives of men, are willingly exposed to the strokes of clubs and swords, without any pretence of necessity, or any call from Divine Providence. What is it but a degree of self-murder, when men out of frolic or humour, out of low ambition of honour, or for the gain of a little pelf, challenge each other to these brutal combats? Their flesh is hacked and hewed with many a wound, their limbs are bruised and battered sorely, their blood is spilt upon a public stage, and life itself sometimes pays for their folly.

I do not suppose indeed that this sort of combatants will ever come within the reach of conviction by any thing that I can write: They are generally too thoughtless of God and religion, too senseless of all that is serious, to look into treatises that relate to sin and duty. But methinks, I would not have such bloody practices encouraged, by drawing in any spectators that ever pretend to godliness. I confess I am not acquainted with any persons that make the sight of these combats a part of their entertainment, but it would be well if such things were utterly cashiered and renounced by a nation that professes christianity.

Did we but read with what just and severe reproof the primitive fathers of the church

used to inveigh against the barbarous, cruel and murdering spectacles of the gladiators at Rome, we should find that in their sense they were so highly offensive to God, that it was disgraceful for any person, who bore the name of a christian, to appear at such entertainments: And I persuade myself, we should be ready to join with these venerable ancients in an endeavour, as far as lies in us, to root out this practice. Those who go to behold them as a matter of delight, and support and encourage them by their contribution to such criminal combats, are in some sense partakers of their guilt.

I might add also, that if we feast our eyes with such inhuman sights as these, it makes blood and wounds too familiar to us, it sets human flesh and life at too vile and cheap a rate, it hardens the temper by degrees, and is ready to induce something of cruelty and brutal roughness, into a constitution, that before might have much of humanity in it.

V. The wicked pride of duelling, when men stab and shoot each other by contract and consent, has much of the guilt of self-murder belonging to it.

Is it not a strange madness for men who are called christians, and who profess to be followers of the meek and holy Jesus, to challenge one another to give or receive present death for a little common affront, and to resolve to kill or be killed for a trifling pique of honour? If professed gamesters will quarrel about the cast of a die, or if two known adulterers will contend about the possession or the reputation of one shameless woman, and resolve to decide their quarrels by the sword or pistol, let them go on to die like atheists as they live; let them be convinced of their madness at the great tribunal of God, who would hearken to no conviction from men; they deserve to feel the terrors of that awful Being in the other world, whom they renounced in this. But let not a man pretend to the name of a disciple of Christ, and run so directly counter to the pattern and the laws of his holy Lord and Master.

How is it possible, these combatants can excuse themselves from the guilt of wilful murder in the sight of God? Do they not go into the field to meet a wilful death, or to give it? Do they not freely expose their breasts to each others murdering weapons, and mutually yield up their lives either to the more happy or the more skilful push of the sword? Doth not one of them frequently fall and die on the bloody spot of ground? And sometimes both of them are wounded mortally. Is it not the real language of their fury, "I will send him to the devil, or he shall send me thither?" And whichsoever of them is slain, I think it is evident, that each of them, in the sight of God, is guilty, at least intentionally, of a double murder. Each duellist offers up his own life to the others weapon of destruction, and invites his neighbour to slay him, while each endeavours to slay his neighbour. Here is intended murder on both sides; this is guilt of a die, and the *Lord will bring upon them both the day of vengeance, and destroy them with a double destruction*, as the prophet *Jeremy* expresses it, chapter xvii. verse 18. "Their own and their brother's blood should be dreadfully required at the hand of both of them, by that God who is the avenger of murder:" For I fear there are but few of these criminals that practise sincere repentance, even if time and space be allowed for it.

But you will say, "Must a man bear all affronts and have no reparation? Must he have the lie given him and take it tamely? Must he be called a fool or a sot without any satisfaction? Our laws have made no privision for the injuries done to a man's honour, therefore I will revenge the injury myself."

Answer 1. For any important injuries done to a man's honour, credit and reputation in the world, whereby he sustains real damage, there are some provisions in the law; but

for giving the lie, or calling a man's understanding in question, these are supposed to be such common inconsiderable things, that it was not worth while to make laws about them. Let a man live so as to render all these imputations incredible; then those names of reproach will die, and do him no hurt. Let him avoid the company where he is so abused, and put himself out of the way of reproach and temptation for time to come.

2. What if our laws have not provided reparation for every little affront, because it was thought below the notice of governors, yet the law hath provided a gibbet for him that escapes the sword, in a duel wherein he hath killed his neighbour. The law of the land calls this murder, and condemns and punishes the murderer by a shameful manner of death. Now because you have been called a liar or a sot, will you therefore resolve either to be stabbed or to be hanged? What strange reasoning is this for a man, who pretends to the sense and education of a gentleman?

3. But let it be further observed, that the law of Christ requires meekness and patience under many injuries; the law of Christ forbids all revenge and murder; his law absolutely prohibits you to kill your neighbour, or to expose yourself to wilful death on the account of such trifles. Come, learn to bridle your passions, and mortify your pride, and then such reproaches will not sit so heavy upon you.

But if you are obstinately resolved to die for a point of honour, go, rush into the other world by the sword, or by the gibbet, and make your appeal for injured honour to the most righteous and supreme tribunal of justice there: God is a just judge; he weighs every circumstance to a grain in a divine balance; but you will find to your terror, that the court of heaven will be so far from approving your conduct, that you will be sentenced to everlasting infamy and shame, as a punishment of your pride; you will be doomed to immortal agonies of conscience, and the wrath of that God whose laws you have impiously broken; and notwithstanding all your fancied self-defence, you will be treated like a man that is guilty of his own and his brother's blood.

Give me leave to finish this head with a few sentiments borrowed from Mr. Collier's discourse of duelling, in the first volume of his essays, which I would recommend to the perusal of those who may be exposed to the danger and temptation of such combats. "It is great pity," saith he, "that men who have such opportunities for sense, should be entangled in so monstrous an absurdity! That those who might be the ornament of their age, and defence of their country, should make themselves a misfortune to both. Perhaps the danger of the adventure, may make them think it honourable; but to risk the main, that is, the concerns of life and eternity, without reason or warrant, is mere rashness; it is to be more stupid than brave. If a man should leap from a garret, or vault down the monument, do you imagine he would leave the memory of a hero behind him? Religion will not endure the duelling principle, any more than all the heresies since Simon Magus. It is a principle so full of pride and passion and revenge; so tempestuous and absurd; so absolutely unallied to reason and good-nature, that polished heathenism would be ashamed of it. In a word, it is as contrary to the tendency and temper of christianity, as Hobbes's creed is to the apostles, as light is to darkness, as God is to the devil."

Perhaps, you imagine you must part with the character of a gentleman, or a man of honour, if you refuse a challenge; but "fear it not." As long as the laws are on our side, the heraldry is all safe. And if it were otherwise, let us remember we are christians. If there happens a competition between these two pretensions, let us drop the gentleman and keep the christian; for he is a person of the best quality.

"But you are afraid your rival will post you up for a coward, and what then? Why then, you should mind it no more than the railing of a man in a fever, or a proclamation from Bedlam." Thus far that ingenious writer.

But the case is far different, if your enemy draw upon you and assault you; for then, your first business is to keep within the compass of self-defence, as long as you can; and if any mischief happen afterwards, and bloody events ensue, you stand justified by the laws of God and man, and may answer for it with innocence and honour whether in this world or the next.

CONCLUSION.

THUS I think it hath been made abundantly evident, both by the light of reason and scripture, that the practice of self-murder can never be justified, and that it is a crime of heinous and flagrant guilt both in the account of God and man. These immortal spirits of ours are ordained for a season to dwell in tabernacles of flesh and blood; curious tabernacles they are indeed, the work of inimitable skill and the structure of a divine architect. The almighty builder is the great proprietor of his own work. We must remember therefore we are but tenants, and not lords; we have no right to demolish these fleshly buildings at our pleasure, but are bound to maintain and repair them under all their totterings and decays, till they become untenantable and can be sustained no longer. If we presume to destroy these earthly dwellings, or suffer them to fall by our ill management, we must give a solemn account of such a guilty conduct to our great and sovereign Lord. I have therefore endeavoured to manifest in various instances, that every step and tendency toward the destruction of one's self has something highly criminal in it, and partakes of the guilt of this sin. We throw ourselves wilfully out of the hope of the favour of God, when we wilfully violate his laws, and especially in such awful and important instances as relate to life and blood.

When we read therefore the histories of such tragical occurrences, let us endeavour to make a wise and pious improvement of those mischiefs which we cannot prevent. When we hear fresh tidings weekly of such unhappy creatures as lay violent hands on themselves; such as lavish away their lives by riotous extravagances, or thoughtless intemperance; such as run along on the precipices of death, and the very edge of destruction, being hurried on by vain glory or wild wagering; such as expose their blood, their souls, and their eternal hopes, in foolish contests of honour, and upon trifling quarrels; I say, when we hear of these things, let us lift up our eyes and our hearts to heaven, and give thanks to the distinguishing mercy of God, which hath preserved us from these guilty and fatal mischiefs. Blessed be the Lord, that our names are not written in those dreadful stories! That we have been secured by his grace from those temptations, and have been kept thus far walking in the paths of life and peace! and at the same time, let us by a devout wish entrust our lives and souls to his keeping. Then let us pity poor mankind who are subject to the rage of such criminal and destructive passions, and who feel the dreadful effects of them: And with a spirit of sacred compassion, let us offer up an humble complaint and prayer to our God, and say, "How long, O Lord, how long shall Satan reign and triumph among the children of men? How long shall the adversary of God and souls make use of the weakness, the folly and the madness of mankind to hurry them off from the stage of life, and to drag them down to his own dark dominions? O send forth thy light and thy truth, and the power of divine love, to rescue and heal a sinful world, and to save souls from perishing!" *Amen.*

THE

HOLINESS

OF

TIMES, PLACES, AND PEOPLE,

UNDER

THE JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN DISPENSATIONS;

CONSIDERED AND COMPARED

IN

SEVERAL DISCOURSES.

THE

PREFACE.

WHEN I tell the world the various occasions of writing these papers which are here collected, my design is rather to gratify the curiosity of my readers, than to add any particular illustrations to the subjects here treated of.

The first of these essays, *viz.* "On the Perpetuity of the Sabbath, and the Observation of the Lord's-day," owes its rise to a practical discourse on that subject, which is printed among the sermons preached at Berry-street, in the year 1733. While I was composing it, my thoughts were drawn out too largely in the argumentative part, which I therefore cut off and laid aside, reserving it for some other opportunity of publication. Since that time I had occasion to review this discourse, and though I think the scheme there proposed to be just and right, yet if there be any weakness in any of the distinct parts of it, I pointed them out in the second appendix; and if they should, upon the strictest examination, prove insufficient to support my conclusions, I there take the freedom to inform the world what would be my succedaneous sentiments on this theme. But still I cannot but conclude that the great expediency of a sabbath through all the ages of mankind, comes very near to a necessity: And if the observation of a Lord's-day be not directly an institution of Christ, yet it comes as near as possible, that is, the direction and example of the apostles.

"The Second Essay on the Hour of the Day for the Administration of the Lord's Supper," arose from the scruples of a pious soul now with God, who found some uneasiness of conscience about receiving the holy communion at noon, according to the custom of many churches. This was written about the year 1710. "The third discourse was a sermon preached on Thursday the 20th of October, 1737, at the opening of a new meeting-house, built near Wapping, by the congregation under the pastoral care of my worthy and esteemed friend, Mr. David Jennings;" and when I transcribed it in order to be published at the earnest request of many of my friends, it received a considerable enlargement both in the doctrinal and the practical part. The fourth arose from my own meditations and anxious enquiries, "Why the forms and rites of all the Jewish worship were much more exactly prescribed by Moses to the Jews, than the forms of worshipping in christian assemblies seem to be prescribed by Christ, or his apostles?" This has lain by me near thirty years, according to my best remembrance.

The last dissertation, *viz.* "On the Difference between the Visible and Invisible Church, and the distinct Holiness of the Jewish Church and the Christian, written in the year 1732," took its rise from a growing opinion which I found in the world, *viz.* that the language of the prophets, both in divine threatenings and promises, addressed to Israel and Sion, must be extended no farther than the Jewish church; and that the discourses of the apostles to the converted gentile churches concerning their former state, refer only to the idolatrous heathens; and that some of the duties prescribed to them with such earnestness, particularly that of faith in Christ, must almost entirely be construed to the use of those primitive converts from superstition and idolatry. Now if these opinions prevail, the writings of the prophets and apostles will seem to me to be too much impoverished and curtailed, and a great part of the advantage of these writings, both of the prophets and the apostles, will be cut off from christians in the present age, because they never were of the seed of Israel, nor have ever been idolatrous heathens, or utterly ignorant of the true God, and Christ Jesus his Son.

The consideration of the holiness of places of worship in my late sermon being urged to the press, inclined me to review many of my manuscripts, and to take these papers out of them which had any cognation or affinity to the same subject, *viz.* "The Holiness of Times, Places, or People," and to publish them together under this title. If my meditations on any of these arguments shall so far find acceptance with my readers, as to lead them into any clearer ideas of some parts of our common christianity, let every degree of knowledge awaken some thankfulness to God, and some happy improvement in the christian life.

I. WATTS

Newington,
May 4, 1738.

THE HOLINESS

OF

TIMES, PLACES, AND PEOPLE, &c.

DISCOURSE I.

THE PERPETUITY OF A SABBATH, AND THE OBSERVATION OF THE LORD'S-DAY.

IT is an unhappy thing indeed, that that very day, which God originally designed for a sacred rest here on earth, and appointed it to be a pledge and emblem of eternal rest in heaven, should become a matter of noisy dispute and contention in his church; but God hath seen fit to exercise our *faith and patience* with some darknesses and difficulties even in his own worship in this world, that we may breathe and long after the light and glory of the future state, with that more perfect rest, and more exalted worship, which is enjoyed and practised in the world above.

Several of the controversies which have risen, with regard to the sabbath, whether jewish or christian, and the holiness of it, though they are not of the highest importance among the doctrines and duties of christianity, yet neither are they mean and trifling; for as we ought not to release the souls and consciences of men from any of the obligations which God and Christ have laid on them; so neither should we *lay any yokes on the necks of disciples*, from which Christ hath released them. However, since there seems to have been *one day in seven* appointed for rest from labour, or separated for divine worship, *from the beginning of the world*, through every dispensation of God to men, I cannot but think there is something of a moral nature in it; and on this account, I suppose God was pleased to begin a sabbath, as soon as he had made a creature who could observe it, and that he designed there should be a sabbath as long as that creature continued on earth; *Gen.* ii. 2. *God rested on the seventh day from all his work, which he had made, and God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it*, or pronounced it holy.

But that we may go on in a regular train of argument, and yet be as brief as possible, I shall sum up my best thoughts on this subject, in the following propositions:

I. "Though man be placed on the earth for labour, or business in this life; yet he ought sometimes to enjoy rest from his earthly labours, and sometime pay worship to the God of heaven." Both these are taught us by the light of reason. There will be some seasons wherein the animal nature of man and beast require some rest from their toil, and that besides the mere sleep of the night. Constant and unceasing toil and labour, from morning to evening, throughout our whole life, would wear out natures made of flesh and blood too fast, and this would not be dealing well with our bodies, *our servants, or our cattle.* There must be some seasons also, wherein God our Creator must have worship paid him by his creature man; and as he is a creature made for society, he

ought to acknowledge God in societies, and to pay him some public worship; and there must be some certain times appointed for this purpose. This also the light of reason requires.

Let it be observed farther, there is some natural connexion between these two, *viz.* rest and worship; for when man is at rest from his own labours, he is more at leisure for religion and the service of God: And when he performs worship to God, he must rest from his common labours. A vigorous employment of the head and hands, in the works of the natural life, is not consistent at the same time with such devotion as God requires of men, either in public or private, which I shall have occasion to mention again before I conclude.

II. "The light of nature and reason doth not evidently teach us what part of time, or how much should be devoted to bodily rest, and to divine worship." Can we absolutely determine, whether some part of every day is sufficient and most proper for both these purposes, or whether we should separate on this account one whole day out of five or ten, seven or seventeen? Who can assign the just medium between too much and too little? Human prudence indeed, and common experience will teach us in the main, that since social or public worship should be performed to God by many persons or families at once, it seems to be more convenient that a whole day should be separated now and then, rather than to make perpetual interruptions of the business of life, by separating a small part of every day for this purpose; and prudence will also teach us, that this whole day should be publicly known and appointed, at least by consent, and common agreement. But there would be endless differences of opinion what day this should be, and how often it should return, if it were left merely to the fancies, conveniences, and agreements of men. Some of a covetous and cruel temper would scarce allow one day in twenty for rest to their servants or cattle: Some have so little love to religion, that they would think one in forty enough for God. Others of a different make would perhaps incline to one day in four or five: And thus there would be probably a continual confusion in this matter, and neither the seasons of rest, nor of worship, well proportioned to the days of labour.

III. "To guard against all those inconveniences, as soon as God had made man, and set him to labour in the garden of Eden, he appointed him *one day in seven* to be a day of rest from labour, and also a season of religion and worship; Gen. ii. 3. *God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, because that in it God rested from his works.* This secured our first parents from any doubts of this kind; and had this been faithfully observed by their posterity, it would have maintained labour and rest, business and worship, in their due poportions, and have secured mankind also from many doubts and contentions on this subject. Reason teaches us to rest, and to worship; and though we cannot determine, with any certainty, by our reasonings, the precise quantity of time which is necessary to relieve animal nature by rest, after its labours, nor can we tell which is a just proportion of time to be assigned to God, and employed for worship and holy purposes; yet God in his infinite wisdom well knew the nature and relations of things, all the necessities of our animal natures, and the dues of his worship, and by the same wisdom he has ordained one day in seven for both these. And I am persuaded there is something perfectly proper, just and reasonable, in the very nature of things, in the appointment of this proportion of time, *viz. one day in seven*, for religious worship, as well as for bodily rest, which divine reason sees plainly, and because man's reason cannot find

it out, God has revealed it to him from the beginning of the world. Reason teaches us *to honour our parents;* but which are our parents, must be told us by men, before we can honour them. It is a moral law, yet we need information of the object before the law can be obeyed: So it is with the sabbath.

The chief thing expressly mentioned in the institution of the sabbath, is a day of rest from the common labours and businesses of life; and by comparing this with other texts of the Old and New Testament, it seems to be designed for these several ends:

1. To give our natures proper refreshment, as well as to relieve the cattle from their toils, which could not well bear incessant labour.

2. To imitate the great God our Maker, who, after *six days spent in creating the world, rested from his work on the seventh,* and is represented as surveying the works of his hand, and pronouncing them *good.* And as man was *made in the image of his Maker,* so he was appointed to act like him in this respect, that is, *to rest from his labours,* and spend that time in contemplating, and honouring his Creator.

3. To preserve a lasting remembrance of the creation of the world in six days among the following generations of men, and hereby secure mankind against idolatry, or forgetting the true God who made the world.

4. To be a token and pledge to Adam, of the state of peace and rest which God would give him, after he had fulfilled his labour of perfect obedience in a state of innocence. But I add also,

5. That since this day was *sanctified,* or made holy, and was blessed of God in its first appointment to Adam, as appears from that text, it intimates to us, that the day should not be devoted entirely to sloth and idleness, but should be employed in some holy exercises, some performances of divine worhip, and also a divine encouragement to expect and hope that the great God might bless his creatures with peculiar blessings at that time, or make it a blessed day to them.

Both these appointments of a seventh day for rest, and for worship, since the light of nature could not determine them, are here mentioned as appointed by God himself, and built on *God's own resting the seventh day from his own work, which he had created.* And what fitter time could there be for Adam and Eve, just created to celebrate the praises of their Maker for his works, than while God is represented as reviewing his own works with a peculiar approbation and delight; *when the morning stars of heaven sang together* on this celestial festival, *and all the sons of God on high shouted for joy,* as it is expressed in *Job* xxxviii. 7. How proper was it for Adam, the son of God below, to join with this holy choir in his Creator's praise?

I have observed that this appointment of *the sabbath, or one day in seven for rest,* and for worship, might be a sort of moral * command, rising from the order of things, and the natural relation of such creatures to a God, and of six day's labour to one day's rest, and so a natural and perpetual duty, though it is here expressed only as derived from the revelation, or discovery of God's resting-day, and as a positive institution.

Nor are these two things at all inconsistent; for there are other duties which are acknowledged to belong to the order and law of nature, and are of a moral kind, though it would be very hard for every man to have found them out by mere reason; and there-

* Note, the word moral is used here in a larger sense, than when it signifies only what the light of reason can find out. If the term offend, I do not insist on it.

fore they were kindly revealed and prescribed to man at first, and that in a way of correspondence with some transactions of God in his creation of the world. So the law of monogamy, or taking but one wife, is argued by the prophet Malachi, because *God made but one woman for one man at first;* Mal. ii. 14, 15. So the pre-eminence, or headship of the man above the woman, the institution of marriage, and the various suitable duties required on both sides, are laid on this foot, *viz.* because God made man before he made the woman, because *he made the woman for the man, and formed the woman out of the flesh and bone of the man;* see Gen. ii. 23, 24. 1 Cor. xi. 3, 8, 9. 1 Tim. ii. 12, 13. Matt. xix. 5. and yet all these things seem to be moral and perpetual: And then why may not the sabbath be so too, which being hard to be found out by the light of reason, was revealed and prescribed to man in the same manner as these? In short, a set time for divine worship seems to be a natural duty, or a moral law: That it should be one day in seven, is revealed and positive, yet in some sense moral and perpetual also: And that it should *be the seventh day*, from the beginning of God's creation, is merely positive, and therefore not perpetual, but changeable as will better appear afterward.

IV. "It is very probable that the pious patriarchs, in the beginning of the world, actually kept this seventh day, though there be no very plain and particular account of it, in so brief a history as that of Moses." Let us observe, that the reasons of it are perpetual, *viz.* a remembrance of the creating work of God in six days, and his rest on the seventh; the necessary rest that belongs to our bodies, our servants, and our cattle; as well as the necessity of the worship of God at certain seasons; all which are contained in the fourth commandment, where we are required *to keep the sabbath holy.*

It may be doubted, indeed, whether all the patriarchs, in their pastoral manner of life, could conveniently keep a sabbath, by meeting in large public assemblies: But as each master of a family was a priest to his own house, so it is most likely they worshipped God in large families assembled on that day in an eminent manner, and their neighbours might attend, though the Bible be silent or obscure as to any notices of it. I say, obscure notices, because though there be no plain and evident examples of keeping the sabbath by the patriarchs; yet how many things are there of plain moral duty toward God and man, which the holy patriarchs without doubt practised, of which there is not the least hint in scripture? Must we conclude then they never practised them?

But there are some texts which have been supposed by critics, to give hints of this practice. Some have thought that in *Gen.* iv. 3. *the end of the days,* when Cain and Abel offered their several offerings, was the end of the week, which was the first, and perhaps the only regular and exact division of time then known in the world, besides day and night. They suppose also, that in *Job* i. 6. *the day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord,* was the sabbath, when pious families came to meet and worship God; for they are called *sons of God;* Gen. vi. 2. And there is reason to suppose that Noah, that just and holy man, might observe the sabbath in the ark, and on the sabbath send out the dove, hoping on that day, to find rest or relief from his tiresome wandering voyage and imprisonment; for it is evident, that he divided his days by sevens in sending out this creature; *Gen.* viii. 10, 12. *

* Besides former writers, Doctor Hunt in his "Essay on Revelation," &c. p. 46. is of this mind. Nor can it be supposed here, that Noah by knowing the influence of the moon on the waters, sent out the dove at two succeeding distances of seven days: For he could never expect the waters to be abated from the face of the ground at the neap-tides, whatever he might do at the spring-tides; when as they rise the highest at the flood, they fall the lowest at the ebb.

But suppose the Bible were entirely silent on this subject; yet it may be justly remarked here, that as there is an express institution of a sabbath in the beginning of the Bible, without any plain and incontested example of the practice in the patriarchal ages, so in the first christian age, there are several plain examples of the practice of keeping the Lord's-day without any express institution of it in the New Testament. But as from such christian examples we reasonably infer an institution, so from the ancient institution, we as reasonably infer there were some patriarchal examples of the practice: But this is only a hint by the way.

Question. But may it not be reasonably supposed, as some writers have done, that Moses only mentions in the second chapter of Genesis, in the history of Adam, a certain sabbath by way of anticipation, which should be instituted in time to come among the Jews?

Answer 1. Can it be imagined, that in so short a history of the creation of the world, Moses should take such particular notice of a certain day, as blessed and sanctified by the Creator, which should not be actually sanctified and blessed till two thousand and four hundred years afterwards? Could this be done only by way of anticipation.

2. Are not the finishing the creation and the institution of a sabbath expressly joined in close connexion, in both places of the Mosaic history? And why should we not believe, that when *God rested on the seventh day from all his work, he blessed this seventh day, and sanctified it,* at that very time? *Gen.* ii. 2, 3. and *Exod.* xx. 11.

3. Did he bless and sanctify this day only for himself and his own rest? No, surely, but for the rest of man, and to be kept holy by Adam and his posterity. *The sabbath was made for man,* as our Saviour expressly tells us, *Mark* ii. 27. And the reason given to man for the appointment of a sabbath, viz. *God's resting from his works of creation,* as it is expressed in the ii. of Genesis, is the same in the xx. of Exodus: And why then should we not suppose it to be given by God to Adam, as well as to the Jews by Moses? Yet again,

4. I ask leave to say, I can hardly persuade myself, that God ever left the world so many ages without so necessary, or at least so very important a means to preserve the true religion in it as the sabbath is. Any religion without some appointed seasons for the celebration of the rites of it, is in great danger of being lost and forgotten by the bulk of those who have learned it. Even all the false religions in the world that we know of, especially in every nation that is civilized, have some particular days or seasons set apart for the practice of some public ceremonies, or the performance of sacred things. The common light of reason shews men the necessity of it, where any religion is to be maintained; and why then should not the true religion enjoy the same advantage? Why should God be supposed so regardless of a matter of such importance? And I would add,—

5. That even in very ancient times, there was a knowledge of the sacredness of one day in seven among the heathens, who would not borrow their religion from the Jews whom they hated, and would never knowingly reverence any of their ceremonies; and therefore these heathen notices of it, and regards to it, must be originally derived from some more ancient tradition of the divine institution of it. See the instances hereof in Dr. Owen of the Sabbath, page 74, &c. Days and nights, lunar months and solar years, are distinctions of nature, and therefore are in the general appearance and succession of them evident to all men by the sun, moon and stars; but how the weekly period of just

seven days should make its entrance, can hardly be well accounted for, but by this tradition of a sabbath. The ancient Chaldeans had this distinction of seven days; *Gen.* xxix. 27. Fulfil her week, said Laban to Jacob at his marriage with Leah. And the Philistines had seven days festival at a wedding; *Judges* xiv. 12, 15, 17. But the instances cited out of heathen writers, *viz.* Homer, Hesiod, Callimachus, &c. concerning their days divided by sevens, are much plainer, as well as concerning the sacredness of a seventh day.

The silence of scripture, or the doubtful notices, of an actual observation of the sabbath by the patriarchs, are no sufficient proof that it was not observed: Or if they had forgot and lost it in any age, through the crimes and apostasy of their fathers, this does not prove it was not instituted at first to be always observed. The law of monogamy, or having but one wife, was lost among the patriarchs as well as the sabbath; and yet it was an original constitution from the beginning of the world. I will readily grant it very probable in some few ages before the flood, as well as in some ages after it, there was a degeneracy in this, as well as other parts of religion: The *one day in seven* might be lost among many nations, and it much wanted to be renewed among men.

V. "As soon as God set apart a nation to be a peculiar church and people to himself in the world, he appointed again *one day in seven for a day of rest* and of public worship." If the day of rest was utterly lost, as probably it was among the slaveries of Egypt or before, yet what day God would have them keep for a sabbath was pointed out by the manna not falling; *Exod.* xvi. 23, 26. *The Lord hath said, to-morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord. Six days shall ye gather it, but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, there shall be none.* The notion of a sabbath seems to be mentioned here not as a new thing, or a thing utterly unknown, though the particular seventh day might be unknown and forgotten.

Let it be observed here, that in the appointment of the sabbath to the Jews, a day of rest seems to be the prime end of the institution; rest from labour seems to be the most obvious original design of it; this appears from the very name sabbath, which is a Hebrew word and signifies rest. It appears also from the frequent repetition of the law of the sabbath peculiarly as a day of rest, both in the books of Moses and the writings of the prophets. See the words of the fourth commandment; *Exod.* xx. 8, 9, 10, 11. *Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy: Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: In it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man servant, nor thy maid servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day, wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath-day, and hallowed it.* Exod. xxiii. 12. *Six days shalt thou do all thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest; that thy ox and thy ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger may be refreshed.* And Exod. xxxi. 15. *The seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord; whosoever doth any work on the sabbath day, shall surely be put to death.* And in the lvi. and lix chapters of Isaiah, promises of mercy are made to those *who keep the sabbath from polluting it, and do not their own pleasure on the holy day* of God. The Jews were sent into captivity for neglecting and profaning the sabbath-day; *Neh.* xiii. 17, 18. And therefore in the history of Nehemiah's reformation, after the return of the Jews from captivity in Babylon, you find frequent mention of his care,

that they might rest from the labours of the week; and thus keep the sabbath; *Neh.* xiii. 15, 16, 19, 21.

The reason which is mentioned, *Exod.* xx. 11. for the institution of the sabbath, is, *because God rested from his work of creation on the seventh day.* This was written on the tables of stone, and pronounced on mount Sinai. And in *Deut.* v. 14, 15. Moses gives another reason, *viz.* because Israel was then delivered out of bondage, and rested from Egyptian slavery. *The Lord thy God brought thee out with a mighty hand, therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath-day.* Thus it appears, that rest as a memorial of God's resting from his works of creation, and of Israel's rest and release from bondage, were the grand points kept in their view in the institution of their sabbath, or of the restoration of it to that people.

But the design of God herein was not that the Jews should wear away the day in lazy idleness; but since they rested and were released from common work, there were other sacred services appointed them; they were obliged to celebrate the worship of God; it was a day of holiness: *Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy.* God ordained on that day *there should be a holy convocation or assembly;* Lev. xxiii. 3. *The seventh day is a sabbath of rest, a holy convocation;* and therein the people were required to meet together for religious purposes, that is, to offer up prayers and praises to God. Thus, saith the Lord, in Isaiah lvi. 6, 7. *Every one that keepeth my sabbath from polluting it, I will make them joyful in my house of prayer.* And in Acts xvi. 13. *On the sabbath we went to a river-side, where prayer was wont to be made.* And the xcii. *Psalm*, wherein God is greatly praised, is called *a Psalm or Song for the Sabbath-day.* The law also was to be read and explained on the sabbath, and all this not only at the tabernacle or temple, but in every place where they dwelt; Lev. xxiii. 3. *It is a holy convocation, ye shall do no work therein, it is the Sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings.* And the scripture assures us, in following times this was constantly done; Luke iv. 16. *Jesus went into the synagogue, as his custom was, and stood up to read.* Verse 31. *He taught them on the sabbath-days.* Acts xiii. 21. *The prophets are read every sabbath-day;* and xv. 21. *Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogue every sabbath-day.* And this practice was perhaps more ancient than some learned men allow for it. *Psalm* lxxiv. 4, 8. there is mention made of synagogues more than once.

There were also several sacrifices prescribed on that day expressly by Moses; *Numb.* xxviii. 9, 10. whereas there was *one lamb offered morning and evening, every day, as a continual burnt-offering: On the sabbath-day two lambs of the first year, and two tenth deals of flour and oil for a meat-offering, and drink-offering: This is the burnt-offering of every sabbath, besides the continual burnt-offering with its meat and drink-offering.*

Thus it is sufficiently proved, that both rest and worship were included among the designs of the sabbath, as renewed to the Jews by Moses.

VI. "The jewish sabbath had many peculiarities in it, or a peculiar judaical holiness, which did not belong to a sabbath, before or after the jewish dispensation, and which made it a special part of their covenant at Sinai, or the political or national covenant between God and that people, which belonged to them chiefly, if not to them only. Exod. xxxi. 13—17. *Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep, &c. Israel shall keep the sabbath, it is a sign between me and you in all your generations.*

We may give, for instance, these things following, which seem to be peculiarly appointed to the Jews, and to belong to the jewish sabbath, *viz.* That seventh day precisely, which

indeed might be, or might not be, the same which the patriarchs had, *viz.* the seventh from the creation; but that seventh day, or sabbath, which they should keep, was pointed out to them only by the manna withheld; *Exod.* xvi. 23, 25. Let me add here, the addition of numerous sabbaths, which were appointed them, besides the seventh day of every week; *Lev.* xxiii. And that absolute and universal rest, which was enjoined them on their sabbath, beyond what the necessity of the relief of nature, or the worship of God required, commemorates their resting from slavery, and may justly be reckoned the ceremonial holiness of the jewish sabbath; for there was contained in it a rigorous severity of abstinence from all common affairs, traffic and labours whatsoever, even for the conveniences of life; *Exod.* xxxi. 15. Add also, the not making fires, or dressing victuals on that day; *Exod.* xxxv. 3. and xvi. 23. Not walking or travelling above one or two miles at most, which is called *a sabbath-day's journey;* Exod. xvi. 29. Acts i. 12. *Not bearing any burdens* whatsoever; *Jer.* xvii. 21, 22. The punishment of the profanation of the sabbath with death; *Exod.* xxxi. 14. and xv. 35. and the double sacrifice of lambs on that day; *Numb.* xxviii. 9, 10. These things, in their strict observance, do not belong to the natural and original law of God, they are not absolutely necessary either for giving due natural rest to creatures, or for the weekly worship of God, and improvement in religion; and therefore they may be reckoned among the peculiar laws of the Jews. As these things are plain scripture, so it would take up too much time to prove all this at present by citing particular texts at large.

VII. "The New Testament, or the dispensation of Christ by his apostles, seems to have abolished every thing of the sabbath which was purely jewish, and which belonged to the ceremonial or the political laws given to the nation of Israel by Moses." This is the evident meaning of those texts wherein christians are forbid to subject themselves to the bondage of jewish rites and formalities; *Gal.* iv. 3, 9, 10. *When we were children*, that is, in the state of judaism, *we were in bondage under the elements of the world*, that is, the rudiments and discipline of the jewish state; *but when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son,—to redeem them that were under the law.—But now after that ye have known God*, in the revelation of the gospel, *how turn ye again to those weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days and months, and times and years*, that is, the Mosaical appointments concerning all their sabbath-days, and new moons, and sabbatical years, which were appointed to the Jews. To the same purpose speaks the same apostle to the Colossians, chapter ii. verses 14, 16, 17. that God or Christ, *had blotted out the handwriting of ordinances which was against us, and took it out of the way: Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of a holy-day*, in Greek a festival, *or of the new moons, or of the sabbath-days*, in Greek sabbaths, of which the law of Moses had many besides the seventh day of the week, *which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ.* And verse 20. he speaks here in the same language which he uses to the Galatians, "Ye christians are dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world." The jewish manner of observation of the several sabbaths appointed in the law of Moses, with all these rigours and severities mentioned in the last proposition, is a mark of the state of the childhood of the church under strict discipline, and of the bondage of it under a yoke of ceremonies and numerous prescribed forms; but under the gospel or New Testament, the church is grown to a maturer age, as the apostle, *Gal.* iv. describes it; and therefore christians are released from such yokes of bondage; and the apostle forbids christians to return to them again,

but charges them to *stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free;* Gal. v. 1. Now that it is the sabbaths and festivals of the Jews only which are here abrogated, appears from the words used both in the epistles to the Galatians and Colossians, which describe their sacred times, festivals, new-moons, sabbatical years, &c. But the original sabbath-day, as appointed to the patriarchs, is not expressed or included therein; for that was out of sight here, being not the matter of contest or imposition.

VIII. "Notwithstanding the abolition of all the jewish sabbaths, and of that rigorous observance of an absolute rest on the seventh or sabbath-day; yet under the christian dispensation one day in seven, that is, *the first day of the week*, has been always observed from the beginning as a day of assembling for pious and religious purposes; and it is very reasonably supposed, to be appointed by Christ himself." Christians under the liberty of the gospel, are not to suppose themselves released from the stated returns of a day of worship. When the jewish dispensation ended, the paradisiacal command seems still in force to all the race of Adam. Yokes of bondage were broken, but natural religion and moral laws are of everlasting obligation. Christians must have a day to worship their God as well as the patriarchs; and therefore they must rest from the common works of men. The evidences which persuade us of the truth of this practice among the first christians are such as these:

1. On the very day of the resurrection of Christ, *the disciples were assembled*, probably for worship, with *the doors shut for fear of the Jews:* This was the first day of the week, *and Jesus came and stood in the midst of them;* John xx. 19. and he pronounced his peace upon them, convinced them of his resurrection, repeated his commission to them, *breathed on them, and said, receive ye the Holy Ghost;* and as he took all occasions to instruct them, so no doubt he gave them larger instructions and exhortations about the things which concerned his kingdom and gospel on this first christian sabbath, than the short history of the evangelists could well repeat; *John* xx. 19, 23. As soon as the Lord rose from the dead, he became their preacher on this glorious day, and blessed the whole assembly.

2. The very next first day of the week, that is, *after eight days inclusively, the disciples were met together again, and Thomas was with them*, when Jesus appeared to them, gave them farther proofs of his resurrection, with suitable remarks on the unbelief of Thomas. And doubtless he spake many other words to them, as well as *wrought many other signs* in their presence, after his resurrection, as in *John* xx. 30.

3. The apostles and other brethren were met together on the day of Pentecost in one place, when *they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance;* Acts ii. 1—4. Now by an easy computation of Pentecost, which is seven weeks, or fifty days from the passover, it is justly supposed by learned men, that this also was the first day of the week, when the Spirit fell on the disciples, and the gospel was preached to great multitudes, and *three thousand souls* were converted to the faith, as it is recorded in *Acts* ii. 41. Blessed success of the word preached on that same first day of the week when the Spirit was given! These actions and blessings seem to prepare the way for the apostolic appointment of the first day of the week, though it was not then publicly appointed.

4. We are informed also, that St. Paul observed this day; Acts xx. 7. *Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together at Troas to break bread, Paul preached to them.* This coming together on the first day must probably be an apostolic appoint-

ment, and is recorded as a customary practice. It is granted indeed, that the apostle went often to the synagogues and places of worship on the jewish sabbath, to teach the people the gospel, because that was the chief opportunity that he could have of addressing a great many persons at once, and of giving particular instructions to the Jews, his kinsmen after the flesh; but when christians who were not Jews nor judaizing, came together to worship, it was usually, if not always on the first day of the week, so far as appears in scripture. In this and the following particular we justly suppose the Greek words μία τῶν σαββάτων to signify *the first day of the week.* But if it should signify what some would have it, the first of the two sabbaths, thence it is evident that there were two days accounted sabbaths; the seventh day by the Jews and judaizing christians, and the first by the pure and more complete christians: And as the jewish converts were very hardly brought off from every judaical rite and ceremony, there was a connivance or permission during the standing of the temple and jewish polity, to indulge many Mosaical rites as part of their civil or political law; so that the jewish christians might have two sabbaths, *viz.* the seventh day and the first; though the first only for the pure christians.

5. St. Paul *gives order concerning a collection for the saints, upon the first day of the week; at least, that every one should lay by him in store according as God had prospered him;* and this same order he gave to the churches of Galatia; 1 *Cor.* xvi. 1, 2. Now their public meetings on this day gave them more conveniency of gathering their charity, than on any other. Besides, the word θησαυρίζων may intimate a weekly collection; for it was designed to prevent collections when Paul came. And it was on the old sabbath or seventh day on which collections were made in the jewish synagogues; for the giving of alms was ever reckoned a proper duty for the sabbath; and the apostle seemeth hereby to transfer the duties of the jewish sabbath to the first day of the week.

6. The religious observation of the first day of the week among christians was so general and well known, that so early as in the days of the apostle John it acquired an honourable title, and was called the *Lord's-day.* This name of honour was given in scripture to nothing else, but *the Lord's-supper* and *Lord's-day.* Then it was also that John was favoured with the prophetic spirit; Rev. i. 10. *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's-day,* and he had the visions of Christ in his glory, and the discovery of things to come. This is called *the Lord's-day,* as relating to the honour of Christ, and to his appointment, as *the Lord's-supper,* obtained that name, from its reference to the appointment and honour of our blessed Saviour; 1 *Cor.* x. 21, 22. and xi. 20. Here it may be proper to enquire, what good reason can be given, why in all these appearances of Christ, and meetings and transactions before mentioned, there should be such particular notice taken by the holy writers, on what day of the week they were done, if it were not to point out a christian sabbath to us? We do not find the third or fourth, fifth, or sixth day of the week mentioned for worship, or any other transactions in the New Testament, as I remember: Nothing but the Lord's-day or the jewish sabbath are specified; one when the Jews worshipped, and the other when the christians met for worship.

7. The primitive writers give us a clear account of the usual observation of this first day of the week by those who professed the christian religion; and they were known and distinguished from the heathens as well as from the Jews, by this particular character of observing the Lord's-day. It would be too tedious in this place to cite all the testimonies of Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Theophilus of Antioch, Clemens of Alexandria, Tertullian,

and others,* which give us an account of this matter of fact in the second and third ages of christianity; and they speak of it as a very early custom or practice, if not from the beginning of the christian church, as planted by the apostles, even while they expressly renounced the jewish sabbatising. Now from all these matters of fact put together, we may derive two good remarks toward the support of the observation of the Lord's-day as a christian duty.

Remark I. Apostolical practice, and the custom of the primitive churches, when joined together, are in themselves a good direction to the conscience of christians under any difficulty. When the apostle Paul seems to find it difficult to give sufficient evidence of the duty of a woman's wearing long hair, and a man wearing of shorter, so as to satisfy the scruples and consciences of christians, observe what he says, "if any man seem to be contentious, let this determine these lesser disputable points, that we the apostles of Christ *have no such custom* for men to wear long hair, *nor the churches of God in the world;* 1 Cor. xi. 16. And why should not apostolical and primitive custom be a sufficient direction for our practice in regard to a sabbath, where clearer discoveries of duty are wanting?

Remark II. The custom of primitive churches supported by the apostles' practice, makes it appear probable, that the observation of the Lord's-day was a divine institution, and that it was the will of our Lord Jesus Christ himself, manifested to his apostles, who were the prime ministers of his kingdom. Is it not highly probable, that this early and general practice was derived from the authority of Christ, who after his resurrection continued forty days on earth, and was often assembled with the apostles, *speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God;* Acts i. 3. Was not the observation of such a day necessary to his kingdom, that is, to the institution and support of his visible church? Is it not also unreasonable to suppose, that the apostles, who received their commission from Christ, to teach the nations to observe whatsoever he commanded them; *Matt.* xxviii. 20. should so zealously pronounce all the jewish sabbaths abolished, in so many places, and such express language, as St. Paul does; and that they should so frequently practise and encourage the assembling together on *the first day of the week*, as a day of christian worship, if they had received no hint of any order, or particular commission, or so much as a direction from Christ Jesus, their Lord, for both these things? In the Lord's-supper St. Paul tells the Corinthians, *that he received from the Lord what he delivered to them;* 1 Cor. xi. 23. And why should we not believe also concerning the Lord's-day, that he received of the Lord the appointment of this first day for christian worship, which he seems to have delivered to the churches where he preached? It is granted that none of these considerations before mentioned, if taken separately, will prove the duty of observing the Lord's-day, yet all joined together, are sufficient to direct our practice, where we have not clearer light. I grant also, that all these considerations here proposed, do not amount to a direct and plain institution of the Lord's-day; but the united force of them all goeth so far toward the proof of such an institution, that renders it highly probable: And where inferences and probabilities are so many and weighty, they must determine our conduct in a thousand affairs of human life, if we would act like reasonable creatures.

* See the Appendix to this first discourse.

IX. "If one day in seven be appointed in the New Testament for christian assemblies, and religious worship, it is most highly expedient, if not necessary, that it should be a day of rest from the common labours of this life." It is certain, the very hours, or minutes, spent in the outward exercises of christian worship, must necessarily be free from earthly business; we cannot in this respect actually serve God and this world at once, nor mingle our solemnities of worship with earthly cares and labours. This is granted on all hands.

Yet some think the sabbath itself begins and ends with the public worship; whereas it is sufficiently evident, that unless the whole day be separated from earthly affairs, and labours, and pleasures, the hours and minutes of worship will be for the most part but poorly improved, and will become much less profitable to our spiritual interest. It is hardly possible to attain the highest and best ends of christian worship, of preaching and hearing, of praying and praising, and celebrating of the Lord's-supper, if we come into the sanctuary with our heads and hearts full of the affairs of this life, and with all our earthly cares buzzing about our minds. How much less good will a sermon do us, if, when the hour of worship is ended, we run immediately from God into worldly business, without giving our thoughts leisure and leave to reflect on what we have heard? What poor proficients shall we be in the school of Christ, if we plunge ourselves all over into the cares and businesses of this world, as soon as ever we have heard the blessing pronounced, and the assembly is separated? And much worse would it be, if we spent the rest of the day in recreations and sports; for these carnalize the spirit, and estrange it from God and things heavenly, more than the common labours of life.

Again, let it be considered, what multitudes there are among mankind, who have very little relish for religion, and have as little opportunity of retirement from the world, and meditating on the things of God and eternity. On the six days of the week, they are ever labouring. How very necessary then is the cessation from earthly affairs, to allow them due leisure to mind the important concerns of religion? Cut off the sabbath's hours of rest and leisure from them, and you cut off both opportunity and encouragement from godliness: And under such disadvantages, it must be some very extraordinary influences from God, that must change such poor, earthly and sensual creatures to a spiritual and heavenly temper of soul, must bring them to the saving knowledge of God, and Jesus Christ his Son, and make them his disciples. As bad as the world is now, it would be much worse, if there were no observation of a sabbath-day, or weekly rest, no Lord's-day among us, even though there were a weekly sermon or two preached in public assemblies.

I might even venture to leave the decision of this controversy to the consciences of all that are truly religious in our nation: Blessed be God! there is a day separated by the ruling powers of this kingdom from the businesses of this life, and that earthly labours are not suffered to intermingle themselves with the work of religion, so as to prevent or destroy the chief design for which that day is appointed. Tell me, ye devout souls, even ye best of christians, tell me, how difficult a matter do you find it to cast off all the cares and concerns of this world entirely, when you come into the presence of God, to celebrate his public worship? Though the whole day be appointed for God and religion, yet how hard is it to shake off all the dust of this earth, and to disengage yourselves from the bonds and burdens of it, when you would ascend to heaven in devotion? Though you

have bid farewell to your secular concerns the night before, and have had a long interval of sleep to divide your thoughts from this vain and busy life, yet how do the crowding cares of it press in upon you, and hang continually upon your spirits, or the trifles and amusements of it hover and play about your souls, and how wretchedly do they divert your hearts from the exercises of godliness, and sadly interrupt those very acts of worship in which you are engaged? Though you have a day allotted for this very purpose, and time to compose your thoughts beforehand, yet how very difficult a thing has it been to secure to your souls one hour together of complete absence and abstinence from all that is carnal and earthly?

But how much harder would it be to fulfil the duties of the sanctuary with any good success, to improve public worship to your further acquaintance with God, and things heavenly, to your greater delight in him, to the mortification of sin, and growth of holiness, if there were no time devoted to religion, but merely that hour or two in the morning, or afternoon, while you are at church? How would the words of the preacher run off from your souls, like a stream of oil gliding over a marble, if there were no recollection to fix it in your memory? How easily would Satan *pluck up the good seed that was sown in the heart*, if you join and assist him, by giving a loose immediately to the cares and delights of this life, and call them to break in upon you at the end of the sermon? How would all your good thoughts and holy desires vanish away like a cloud, and ascend and be lost like a vapour, or the morning dew? A day of rest from the pleasures and toils of this life is necessary to render divine worship more effectual to our sanctification and salvation. We should therefore quit our heads and hands of worldly cares that day, that we may more easily converse with God and our own souls, and by secret and public devotion may be the better prepared for each other, in their turns, and improve more in religion by both of them. We may reasonably conclude then, if Christ appointed the first day of the week for a season of the worship of God, he appointed it also to be a season of rest from the concerns and labours of this life, that his worship might be better performed, and the great ends of it be best secured.

If it be enquired here, "Why the first day of the seven was appointed for the christian sabbath, rather than any of the others?" It is usually answered, and with good reason, that when *God rested from his work* of creation, he appointed the seventh day for the ancient sabbath, to keep in mind the Creator of the world; and so when Christ rested from his works of redemption, he might appoint the first day, even the day on which he arose from the grave, as most proper to keep the great work of our redemption in memory. That *the first day of the week* was observed by the apostles, and first christians, in honour of the resurrection of Christ, is evident from its being called by a new and honourable name, *the Lord's-day*, as well as from other hints of scripture, and many plain and express assertions in the history of the primitive church.

You will say, why should not his birth, or his death, be as much a reason for pointing out a new sabbath, as his resurrection? I answer, because neither the day of his birth, or his death, have such a name, or such honours put on it, as that of his resurrection; no apostles or churches have recommended it by their practice or example. Besides there are very great and learned men, who suppose that the apostle Paul, in the fourth chapter to the Hebrews, proves a christian sabbath on this principle of Christ's finishing his work of redemption, and his rising from the dead; verse 4. *He spake in a certain place of the*

seventh day on this wise, and God did rest the seventh day from all his works; verse 7. *Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, to-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts; for if Jesus,* that is Joshua, *had given them rest,* that is, if he had given them all that complete rest in the land of Canaan, which was typified by the jewish sabbath, *then he would not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest,* or sabbatism, as the Greek word is, there remaineth the keeping of a sabbath *to the people of God; for he that is entered into his rest,* which they refer to Jesus Christ, in his work of redemption, *he hath also ceased,* or rested, *from his own works as God did from his.* See Dr. Owen, in his treatise of the sabbath.* Thus the Son of God, the Redeemer, is supposed to have appointed a day, or sabbath, to celebrate his rest from his labours and sufferings, as God the Father, the Creator, did, when he rested from his works.

I might add here also, that as the redemption, or rest from Egyptian bondage, given them by God, and Moses, is mentioned in *Deut.* v. 15. as one reason of the jewish sabbath, so our greater redemption by Christ, or rest from the bondage of sin and Satan, being on this day completed, seems to be a proper reason for a christian sabbath. Consider also, that our redemption from sin and hell was typified by the Jews' redemption from Egypt, and as the type had its commemorative day of rest appointed, so should the antitype have its day of commemorative rest also. Besides, it is worthy of our notice, that by appointing the first day of the seven for a sabbath, after the seventh day was abolished, there remains still one day in seven, to perpetuate the memory of the creation, and it is the first day of the seven, to perpetuate the memory of the work of redemption: Thus our Lord's-day includes both. And by the appointment of the first day also, it comes to pass, that as soon as ever the jewish sabbath was ended, and buried with Christ in the grave, the christian sabbath arises, when he arose from the dead. *The first day of the week* is consecrated to God, and if duly celebrated, will spread a blessing over the following week, as the first-fruits did upon all the harvest; though we must remember that any public promulgation or injunction of it upon christians, does not appear till a considerable time afterwards, and even this is manifested chiefly by example.

X. Upon the whole survey of things, it seems highly probable, "that there is some sort of sabbath, or one day in seven divinely appointed for the rest of man, and for the worship of his God, which has run through all the dispensations both before and after Moses, and must remain to the end of the world,"† which will appear if we look back and consider.

1. "The time of the first notice, and appointment of a sabbath, and the persons to whom it was given." It was in paradise, as soon as man was made: God having formed the world, and its inhabitants, in six days, and rested the seventh, he distinguished the days of the year into weeks, and claimed one day in seven for his own worship, as well as gave it unto Adam for his rest, or release from earthly business. *He sanctified it and blessed it,* he separated it for the purposes of rest and worship, and pronounced a blessing upon it, and upon them that observed it. Now there is as much reason, and as much need for all

* I do not pretend to enter into this debate, or to support the argument drawn from the fourth of the Hebrews, as sufficient to prove the christian sabbath; yet so many congruities between the creation and redemption, in this respect, deserve our notice.

† Though I have inserted most of the following particulars in a sermon on the Lord's-day, published among many others, yet I thought it necessary to repeat the chief substance of them here also, because they are necessary to complete the argument.

the sons of Adam, in all ages and nations, in their feeble and sinful state, to have a day appointed for their own rest, and for the worship of their God, as there was for Adam himself in paradise, and in a state of innocence; for his body was then in perfection of health and vigour, and his mind more inclined to remember God and worship him.

2. "The original reason that is given for one day in seven to be sanctified, seems to confirm the perpetuity of it, *viz. God's own rest from his work of creating the world in six days.*" The sabbath was given to man, to put him in mind of the creation of the world by the true God, and to do honour to God the Creator; but all mankind, in all ages, should preserve this in memory, and the continual return of a seventh day of rest is an everlasting memorial of it, and gives new opportunities continually for paying this homage to that Almighty Being that made us, and this habitable world.

3. "The place which this command of the sabbath bears in the law of God, when it was renewed and enjoined to the nation of Israel, doth," in the opinion of most divines, add considerable weight to this argument. It is one of the commands of the moral law, which was pronounced by the mouth of God himself on Sinai, with much glory and terror. It stands amongst those laws which are generally conceived to be moral and perpetual, except in some small limitations and accommodations to the jewish state: *It was written* with the rest *in tables of stone*, which perhaps in that typical dispensation might denote perpetuity, and that it must last, like a rock, for ever. It was written *by the finger of God himself*, which gives a peculiar honour to it; and it was laid up in *the ark of the covenant*, on which God dwelt in a bright cloud, or a blaze of glory behind the cloud, and thus it was put under God's own eye and care. These considerations carry some weight in them, though I must confess, I do not build my opinion and practice chiefly on the fourth commandment.

4. "Consider the actual observance of one day in seven for christian worship, as appears by the practice of the apostles, and the church, from the earliest days of it, even when the jewish ceremonies, and their absolute rest, in all the rigours and severities of it, were abolished." This is another probable proof, at least, of the appointment of the christian sabbath by our blessed Lord, to be observed by his church, as I argued before.

5. "The reasonableness, if not the necessity, of such appointment, in order to keep up religion in the world, as well as to give rest to the animal bodies of men and beasts, adds further proof of the morality or perpetuity of it." The seasons of worship which men would have chosen, and even of natural rest which some men would have allowed, would probably have been short and few enough, if God had not always devoted one day in seven to these purposes.

It is evident in common experience, and by observation made upon persons, and churches, and nations, that where no sabbath is observed, that is, where one day in seven is not separated to God, by a rest from the usual labours of life, and a dedication to his service, religion is in a very decaying state, and in great danger to be lost. As it is a common confession of persons, who fall into the vilest crimes, and are executed by the public justice of the magistrate, that their disregard of the sabbath was the beginning of their guilt and ruin, and made way to all iniquity; so a careful observation of one day in seven, for religious purposes, has been the great spring and support of virtue and piety amongst mankind, and the constant guardian of it, in its purity and power. And there is reason to believe, that the nations before the flood, as well as for many ages after it, had not run into such universal corruption, such a forgetfulness of the true God, and such

vile idolatry, if they had not neglected and lost that one day in seven, which God appointed from the beginning, to be observed in memory of the creation of the world by himself, in six days.

6. I know not whether it be improper to add in the last place, "that the spiritual or prophetical signification of the sabbath, or of this appointed day for rest, and worship, seems to run through every dispensation of God to men." There seems to be an emblematical promise contained in it, that is, a heavenly rest promised by God to man, after his labours and services here on earth, and an everlasting day of final joy and worship in his own presence; and this both under the covenant of innocency made with Adam in paradise, and under the covenant of grace made with fallen man, in every dispensation of it. The language which the apostle uses in the fourth chapter to the Hebrews, seems to denote thus much, *viz.* That a sabbath-day, to commemorate God's ceasing from his works of creation, was appointed to be observed by the seed of Israel, as a figure, pledge and promise of the land of Canaan, where the Jews should have rest, not only from the bondage of Egypt, but from their tiresome travels in the wilderness: And yet further it was a token and pledge of the rest which christians would enjoy under the gospel, that is, a release from the bondage of sin, as well as a figure of the final rest in the heavenly state, which all the people of God should be partakers of in the world to come. Now since the promise of this heavenly rest, and glorious state of divine worship, is not yet accomplished, I have not yet met with sufficient reason why one day of worship and rest, after six days of labour, which is a figure and emblem of it, should entirely cease. There are some figures and emblems in every dispensation, till all the graces and blessings signified thereby are fulfilled.

Now, if all these considerations put together, will but go so far as to make it highly probable, that one day in seven has been always the proportion of time which God has appointed for a sabbath, that is, for rest from labour, and for divine worship, this probability, as to the time and manner of a duty, should go for evidence, where no further evidence can be procured, and where the duty itself seems clear and certain. And since some rest from labour, and some seasons for worship are necessary, we cannot do a more reasonable thing, than to separate that proportion of time, which the wisdom of God has certainly separated in some of his dispensations to men, and most probably in all of them: Nor can we choose a fitter day than that, which, by very probable reasons, is recommended to us by the example of the apostles, and primitive churches, when all jewish sabbaths are entirely abolished.

Yet here I ask leave to make this remark, That though both rest and worship run through the law of the sabbath in all ages; yet by diligent reading the Old Testament, and the History and Laws of the Jews, we find that rest from their own labours, and business, and pleasures, on the seventh day, is the grand point kept chiefly in view, in the commands and threatenings relating to the sabbath, and that not only as an advantage to spiritual worship, but as being in itself the most noted and visible part of their sabbatising. But in the New Testament, assembling for christian worship, is most frequently represented as the design of the first day of the week, or Lord's-day. Which, of these two, is most noted and visible in the original and paradisiacal sabbath, is doubtful. Now, may it not be inferred, that the Jews were required to worship God on their sabbath, because God had appointed it a day of rest from labour; and that christians should rest from their labour on their Lord's-day, because God has appointed it a day of worship. And perhaps

this may be one reason, why the rest, or release from work, on the jewish sabbath, was more strict and absolute, as being a ceremony primarily in view, or at least most express and obvious in the command: But in the christian sabbath, or Lord's-day, worship being the primary design of it, no more rest is necessary, than may attain the best ends and advantages of christian worship,* and that will be such sufficient relief or rest for animal nature, as was designed from the beginning, and made perpetual.

The jewish state was the childish age of the church, as St. Paul to the Galatians represents, chapter iv. the christian dispensation, is its more mature age: Now children are trained up in religion, by being brought early into the public assemblies of worship first to teach them to sit still, and rest from labour, and from play, and bodily exercises; but when they grow up to mature years they learn and practise the worship of God in public assemblies. In younger childhood, the chief design of their observation of a sabbath, or their coming to church, is a separation or abstinence from the things of the world: In their growing years, and riper age, it is, that they may honour and glorify their Creator and Redeemer.

I confess, this is but a similitude, but it is borrowed from St. Paul's description of the jewish and christian states: Yet, to confirm this general remark, I would take notice, that the jewish day for worship and rest is always called the sabbath, which signifies rest: The day for christian rest and worship is never called a sabbath in scripture, but *the first day*, or *the Lord's-day*, to denote its reference to our risen Lord, and his honour. Here are several questions which arise on this subject, but I shall only give a brief answer to three or four of them here.

Question 1. Since it is granted, that at the abolition of judaism, that paradisiacal or patriarchal command for observing the sabbath in general abides still in force, and since the seventh day from the creation was appointed in the same original command, why does not that abide in force too? And why is not the seventh day the only true sabbath now, as well as it was in the days of the patriarchs, or from the beginning of the world.

Answer 1. We can never find with certainty, which is the seventh day from the creation; and God would never make it a necessary duty to observe such a day which is impossible to be found out. It is generally granted, that the seventh-day sabbath was lost under the Egyptian bondage, if not for many ages before: Now if there was so great an interruption, I think it is hard to be proved, that the jewish sabbath† was the seventh day from the creation of the world; this is often made a doubt and matter of dispute in this controversy. Some learned men, by exact calculations have pretended to find, that the sabbath which God discovered and marked out for their future observation by providing a double quantity of manna the day before, was really the sixth day of the week, and not the seventh from the creation. And if so, then christians who keep the Lord's-day are actually returned to the ancient paradisiacal or patriarchal sabbath, that is, the last day of the week of the creation.‡ Whether these

* Though worship be the chief design, yet I do not pretend, that actual worship should fill up the whole day; but the best ends and advantages of worship cannot be obtained, where there is not a day of rest from the businesses and labours of human life, as I have shewn before.

† Though the jewish sabbath may be called sometimes the seventh day, this can only mean the day of rest after six days of labour, which is the constant sense of it; but not the very seventh day on which God rested, and which he sanctified for a sabbath to Adam in paradise.

‡ Mr. Joseph Mede, that very learned writer, in the last age, discourses on the sabbath, from *Ezek.* xx. 20. *Hallow my sabbaths, and they shall be a sign between me and you, to acknowledge that I Jehovah am your God.*

calculations of days, which I have here represented from the writings of learned men are just or no, yet still it seems that men of learning, even in our age, are not all agreed, and cannot certainly teach us, which was the true seventh day, or the sabbath of Adam and the patriarchs before Moses: And if it cannot be certainly known by the learned, it can never be known by the bulk of mankind, and therefore it is impossible to be observed; nor would God command all men to practise what cannot be known by the greatest part of them? Do we not esteem it a sufficient reason against the absolute necessity of the succession of bishops, or ministers, in a right line from the apostles, that this line of consecration and succession, by running through all the ages of popery, and the contests of two or three popes at one time, has been so broken, that it can never be certainly known, and therefore such a sort of ecclesiastical succession and consecration, can never be absolutely necessary to furnish the christian church with ministers or holy ordinances? Now if this reason be good, in the case of persons who celebrate divine worship, why should it not be good also in cases relating to the time or day of divine worship? On the other hand, the true day of the resurrection of Christ on the first day of the week, has certainly been conveyed down to us by the christian churches without interruption: And since there are no such doubts about this day, as are about the seventh day after the creation, why should we not rather keep that day, which has so much encouragement and countenance in the New Testament, and may certainly be known by us?

Answer 2. But I add yet farther, that the observation of one day in seven for rest and

And here he supposes, that as in the xx. of *Exodus*, the creation of the world in six days, and God's resting on the seventh, is given as the reason why the Jews were appointed to keep one day in seven; so in the fifth of *Deuteronomy*, their deliverance from Egypt, and their rest from bondage, was the reason why they were required to keep that particular day for their sabbath, whether it were the seventh from the creation or no. Scripture no where tells us it was so, though men take it for granted. Certain I am, saith he, the Jews kept not that day for a sabbath till the raining of manna: And when it had rained manna six days together, it rained none on the seventh, which was the twenty-second day of the second month, and this they were commanded to keep for their sabbath. Now if the twenty-second day of the month were the sabbath, the fifteenth should have been so too, if that day had been kept before as the seventh from the creation: But the text tells us plainly, *Exod.* xvi. 1. that they marched a wearisome march on that day, and this by God's own appointment, that is, by the leading cloud; and therefore it is plain they did not keep it as a sabbath. Now since the beginning of their year was altered for a memorial of their coming out of Egypt, *Exod.* xii. 2. why might not their day of holy rest also be altered for a memorial of the same mercy? And thus God, as the Creator of the world, and as their Redeemer from the land of bondage, had his proper memorial of both in the jewish sabbath, even Jehovah their Creator and Redeemer.

There is a learned author has written a treatise, 1683, whose running title is, "The Patriarchal Sabbath;" and he also, by computation drawn from the xvi. chapter of *Exodus*, says, "As God at the institution of the Passover appointed that month to be the first to the Israelites, which was not the first in respect of the creation, so he purposed to change the beginning of the week to the Israelites, and appoint that day their seventh, which was the sixth in the patriarchal account. And he left a plain note or character upon it, perhaps he means the with-holding the manna, page 99. And in page 186, he says, "All communion with heathens is pathetically forbidden to the Jews, lest they should by that means be drawn to idolatry; and therefore, we have less reason to wonder that God should appoint the Jews another day for their weekly sabbath, than that which was instituted at first to all mankind, when the gentiles had perverted the consecration of that day to the worship of the sun. And for the like reason, the christian church changed the name of Sunday into that of the Lord's-day, that she might secure her children from the opinion of the heathen world, that it was in honour of the planet of the sun."

But besides this, he adds, page 188, "The more special reason of God's appointing the Saturday for their sabbath, was because Saturday was the first day of rest they had from Egyptian bondage: For they marched from Rameses on Friday the fifteenth day of the first month, and set up their booths at Succoth on Saturday," which I suppose this author takes to be too laborious a work for a sabbath; and that therefore Saturday could not be the ancient sabbath, but the next day they rested there.

The learned Doctor Wallis, in his controversy with Mr. Bampfield on this subject in 1692, and 1694, says, "Whether this new seventh day from the first raining of manna, be the same with that from the creation, no man can tell; but there is six to one odds, that it is not." And Doctor N. Homes in 1673, wrote an essay to prove that our Lord's-day is the same day in the week, which was the ancient patriarchal-sabbath.

for worship, seems to be so far of a moral nature as to be of perpetual obligation, as I have before proved; for it hath a necessary and very important influence both towards the honour of the great God, and the temporal and spiritual welfare of mankind, to keep one day in a short rotation or compass of time; and because man could not find out the due proportion, God himself had manifested it from the beginning of the world: But that this should always be precisely the seventh day from the creation carries no such necessity in it, nor does nature or scripture tell us so; and it is beyond the power of my reason to find out the morality of it, or what necessary influence it has toward the honour of God, or the welfare of man; and therefore I cannot see that it is of perpetual obligation, or that it is unchangeable. And though God might once command it to the Jews, or to Adam and the patriarchs, yet he might make a change of it upon any proper occasion. Since therefore we christians obey the command of keeping one day in seven for rest and worship, which seems to be moral; and since in the mere nature of things there seems to be as good reason to observe the first day of the week in honour of our Lord's resurrection, and our redemption from sin and hell, as the patriarchs had to keep the seventh in imitation of God's resting from creation, or the Jews keeping their sabbath to commemorate their deliverance and rest from Egyptian bondage; and farther, since it was the direction and example of the apostles, and seems to be the most general opinion and practice of the primitive christians and churches to keep this day, I think our reasonings on this side are the strongest and most weighty.

There is, so far as I can find, no plain proof in all the New Testament, of christians* keeping the seventh day as a sabbath, after the christian dispensation began at Pentecost, *Acts* ii. and since the honours due to God for the creation of the world, as well as for the redemption by his Son, are paid to him one day in seven, by our resting and worshipping on that day, in conformity to apostolic example; we think *the first day of the week* bids much fairer for our observance than the sabbath of the Jews. But to make it yet plainer that the keeping of the seventh day of the week has no morality in it, let us enquire whether there are not some cases wherein it is impossible to be precisely observed, even though it were once known: As for instance,

If a nation kept their sabbath on the seventh day by supposed divine appointment, and a fleet of their ships should be sent round the world, travelling towards the west, this would make their days longer; and as they would find fewer days in compassing the globe, so they would find their own sixth day to be the sabbath of their nation at their return home. Or suppose they should travel towards the east, their days would be shorter and more in number, and they would find their own eighth, or first day of the week, to be the nation's public sabbath at their return. Now if either the first or last day of the week appear to have any thing moral in them, surely it ought to be observed: And thus in the nation there would be three sabbaths kept, *viz.* the Friday by those who went westward, the Sunday by those who went eastward, and the Saturday by those who tarried at home. And by another such voyage the eastern travellers would bring their sabbath to Monday, and the western to Thursday? Can we think that the moral law of God requires this diversity of sabbaths? Is it a moral command to the eastern travellers, that they should

* Some have supposed that the apostle's argument in *Heb.* iv. implies the seventh-day sabbath observed by some christians. I have searched into that text, and I think Paul's argument is very good without that supposition. But if it be granted that *Heb.* iv. intimates the jewish sabbath to be kept, it is only by converted Jews; and let it be remembered that these jewish christians were very long a weaning from judaism.

keep their seventh day, which is the eighth to the inhabitants of the nation? Is it a moral duty to the western travellers to keep their seventh, which is the sixth to all the nation besides? And if it were a moral duty, would it be lawful for either of them to resign their pretences to the custom of the nation when they came home, and to change their day? One day in seven may be moral, because it may be observed by all the dwellers and travellers round the earth; but the seventh day from the creation cannot be so, and therefore is not unchangeable.

Perhaps it will be replied here, does not this difficulty and uncertainty fall as hard and heavy on the first day of the week as it does on the seventh? I answer, By no means; for I bring it only to prove, that the very seventh day of the creation is not a moral law: Now we do not pretend, that the first day is of a moral nature, but is a mere positive appointment; and since we find out that, rather by the custom of the churches and apostles, than by express words of scripture, so I would follow the custom of the churches also in any such difficulty, where the first day should be lost or become doubtful, since it is not a duty of the moral law, and its institution by Christ is not so express and evident as could be desired. I own I lay not much stress upon such geographical arguments about the change of the day by travellers; but I had a mind to shew, that God would not lay much stress upon such a changeable point, and that this change of the day to travellers does not so much affect the christian Lord's-day as it does the seventh day from the creation, if the one be insisted on as a moral law and unchangeable, and the other does not pretend to such a morality and unchangeableness.

Question 2. If the christian sabbath depend on the command in paradise, as to the proportion of one day in seven, why did it not immediately take place upon the abolition of all jewish sabbatisms? And why was not this plain and original reason given for it by the apostles? And if the day was changed from the seventh to the first, what reason can be given why the Jews did not raise a violent opposition to it at its first institution, who never failed to oppose every thing of that kind contrary to the Mosaic law? And why did christians themselves keep the seventh day, which it is plain, from church history, that many of them did long after the pretended institution of the first day?

Answer. I join all these questions in one, because I think one answer will serve for them all.

Though the original reason of a sabbath was the command in paradise, yet that idea had been probably lost before the days of Moses, and for many ages since it had been as it were overwhelmed with the various sabbatisms of the Jews, and the ceremonies depending thereupon: And though it stood in the Mosaic history, yet as many Mosaic laws were long forgotten and unpractised during the state of judaism, so this law of paradise did not immediately emerge and arise again into clear light and practice, but might be mingled with jewish sabbatisms in the minds of men, nor appear even to christians themselves in a distinct light. It was by the wise providence of God that it was permitted to lie unnoticed for a season, till the jewish christians were more brought off from their excessive fondness for Mosaic rites.

And though the reasons of the change of the day, from the seventh to the first, came from the resurrection of Christ, and was plainly in many instances observed by the apostles, yet it was not all at once prescribed to christians as a new command, nor introduced into the churches. The first christians for many years were originally Jews, and the first great business and labour of the apostles, after preaching the essential doctrines of

religion and the gospel, was to take them off from all jewish ceremonies, of which their sabbatisms were some of the chief; this appears from scripture with great evidence. But afterwards, when the gentiles were converted, and jewish sabbaths not brought in among them, the importance and necessity of a certain fixed day for christian worship appeared more and more; and the observation of the first day, which had been intimated by apostolic example before, was more plainly taught and introduced among christians by degrees.

Nor is this strange that it should be so, when there are other doctrines and duties of more moment, such as the atonement of Christ for sin, faith in that atonement, &c. which our Saviour and his apostles introduced among men in the christian dispensation, not all at once, but gently and obscurely at first, and by such degrees, as men were able to bear it. And it is upon this account that we do not read of any such signal opposition of the Jews to the observation of the first day of the week, as might have been expected: Yet the jewish christians might make some opposition to it, as it seems from *Rom.* xiv. *Col.* ii. &c. And they did possibly observe the seventh day for some time, perhaps together with the first, or perhaps without it, because they were not perfectly cured of judaising; and the gentile converts might sometimes join with them, partly being entangled with jewish scruples, and partly by way of condescension and compliance with indifferent things for the sake of peace and charity, of which St. Paul gives us remarkable examples and rules on other occasions.

This will also give us a very fair answer to that argument for the continuance of the jewish sabbath, which is drawn from our Saviour's advice to his disciples, relating to the destruction of Jerusalem, Matt. xxiv. 20. *Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, nor on the sabbath-day*, &c. This text will by no means prove that our Saviour intended the jewish seventh-day sabbath should be observed by christians after the time of the destruction of the jewish polity: But he foresaw the prejudices both of Jews and jewish christians would be so strong, that christians might find very great inconveniences thereby, both in their own consciences, and by the opposition of the Jews, if their flight from the destruction of the city happened on the sabbath of the Jews. And if this signify their flight on the sabbath-day, it is certain that our Saviour here can only mean to shew the hardships which might arise on this occasion from jewish customs or prejudices; for neither Jews nor christians were by any laws of God forbidden to fight, or fly, or do any thing necessary for the safety of their lives on a sabbath, either under judaism or christianity. But while the jewish polity was not yet absolutely and utterly dissolved, but only dissolving,* the flight of his disciples might be many ways rendered exceeding troublesome on a sabbath. Yet I think Dr. Hammond's conjecture is not utterly to be omitted here; for if the word σάββατον in this place can mean the sabbatical year, their flight would be doubly inconvenient, both in the winter, when there was no food in the field, and on the sabbatical year when the fields were not sown, and both war and famine would come together. Now if this be the sense, the sabbath-day has nothing to do in this text.

* Many of the Mosaical precepts are to be considered as political, as well as religious ceremonies. Now while the jewish polity subsisted, not only sabbaths, but even circumcision, some sacrifices, and several other things, seem to be left upon a foot of indifferency, as things decaying and vanishing away, as the apostle speaks, *Heb.* viii. 13. and as things lawful to be complied with, according as prudence should dictate to the jewish christians in the places where they were; while at the same time the religious obligation was really finished at the setting up of the gospel-state, or christianity, at the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit was poured out.

Question 3. Is not the holiness of days and times abolished under the New Testament, as well as the holiness of places? Are not the expressions which abolish all sabbaths very plain and express? Does not the apostle severely reprove the Galatians, chapter iv. 10. for *observing days and months, and times and years?* Does he not teach the Colossians, chapter ii. 16. that *no man should judge them in meats or drinks, or in respect of a holy-day, or new moons, or sabbaths?* How can we suppose then there is any holiness of days required under the christian state? Or what holiness belongs to the Lord's-day, wherein christians meet to worship?

Answer. The holiness either of days or places has very great degrees of difference in it. The land of Canaan was the holy land, because the people of God dwelt in it. Jerusalem was yet a more holy city, because God chose it for his habitation and his temple-worship. The inner courts of the temple were so holy that the gentiles might not walk in them; and besides this, there was the holy place where none might enter but the priests; and the most holy, where the high-priest only might appear, and that but once in a year. So it is also in times; there are several degrees of holiness in them. *God blessed the seventh day* in paradise, *and sanctified it*, or made it holy, that is, separated it from the other days by a peculiar appointment for the rest of man, and the worship of God; so that the common labours of life were not to be continued or carried on upon that day. But it was a much higher degree of holiness that God put on the jewish sabbath, by ordaining most peculiar ceremonies of worship, and by a more absolute and rigorous command of resting from every purpose of human life which was not absolutely necessary, and by severe penalties on the offender. Now all this jewish holiness of times is abolished by the authority of Christ, and the writings of St. Paul under the gospel, as I have shewn before. And indeed our Saviour seemed to give hints of this kind to the Jews, that the rigorous observance of the ceremonial sabbath was vanishing, when he told them, *the Son of man was Lord of the sabbath;* Mark ii. 38. and bid the paralytic whom he healed *take up his bed and carry it* on the sabbath-day; *John* v. 8—11.

These jewish sabbatizings being now abolished by many scriptures, and all their ceremonial holiness, I thing the holiness of the Lord's-day cannot rise higher than that of the paradisiacal sabbath before the jewish ceremonies and holy things were introduced, for we have no such new order given us in the New Testament. If therefore we do but so far rest from the common businesses of life as the due seasons of christian worship require, in order to render that worship most useful to the public honour of our blessed Lord, and to our own inward holiness and growth in grace, the chief designs of this day are complied with and obtained: Nor do I see any inconvenience in allowing that one day in seven, and particularly *the Lord's-day*, may have so much holiness as this in it; since we suppose the chief parts of it are to be separated from the common businesses of human life, in order to worship God and our risen Saviour, whose name the day bears, while all jewish sabbatisms and holy days are abolished and renounced for ever.

Question 4. If the observation of a holy sabbath, or one day in seven for worship and rest, be of such importance to preserve religion in the world, why is there not a more express and plain command for it under the New Testament? Why should we be left in such obscurity, that we can only spell out our duty by inferences from the Old Testament, and some examples and probabilities in the New, concerning the observation of one day in seven, as well as concerning the change of that day from the seventh to the first? Give me leave to answer this two or three ways.

First, If our Saviour, or his apostles, had insisted too early, and too plainly on the observation of one day in seven, as a day of holy rest from labour, they had been in danger of giving occasion to the jewish christians to have continued their rigour of sabbatising; for they were so fond of these yokes and ceremonies, that they were very hardly weaned from them. Many of the weaker disciples would scarce have known how to distinguish between the strict ceremonial holiness of days imposed in judaism, and the appointment of religious worship, under the gospel, with a merciful release from the labours of life on *the Lord's-day*. But I answer,

In the second place, by giving an instance of the like kind, wherein God has left a moral duty under the same obscurity. Was not monogamy, or the marriage of but one wife, as important, and as necessary to the peace of families, the regular and pious education of children, and the good order of the world in all ages and nations, as it is to christians under the gospel? And why then was the law, which prohibits more wives than one, left so obscure and so uncertain under the Old Testament in the patriarchal and jewish age, that it seems to be unknown, and was often violated both by Jews and patriarchs? Why was there a sort of permission for divorces given by Moses upon other causes besides fornication, when our Saviour forbids it under the gospel, and seems to declare it to have been an irregular thing even *from the beginning of the creation;* Matt. xix. 3—9. And yet there is no plain disapprobation of polygamy, nor divorces, till the days of Malachi, the last of the prophets; *Mal.* ii. 14—16.

But let it be observed, that our Saviour gives us the reason of this doubtful and uncertain notice of this moral duty, where he tells us, that *Moses, because of the hardness of their hearts, suffered them to put away their wives, though from the beginning it was not so* ordained, that is, the general reason, why God left it under this obscurity, and gave no such plain and express precepts and prohibitions about some of these things to the Jews and patriarchs, might be, because he foresaw that strong temptations from within and from without, from the customs of the world, and the appetites and passions of nature, would render the duty difficult to be constantly practised in their circumstances, or the sin difficult to be avoided: Now, where a duty is not clearly known or discovered, the crime of neglecting it is proportionably diminished. Sins against the light of reason, or revelation, are scarce imputed, where there is not light enough to lead men into the knowledge of their duty, if there be but a sincere willingness to find out and practise every duty within the reach of their enquiries.

In like manner, when the religion of Christ was to be diffused amongst all ranks of people, rich and poor, bond and free, in heathen nations, where there were no sabbaths observed, our Saviour knew it would be exceeding difficult, especially for persons in poor or servile circumstances, to keep a sabbath religiously, to rest from their labours one day in seven, and devote it to religious purposes: He might think it proper, therefore, to give no such express and solemn command about it, but introduce it by degrees into the churches, lest the consciences of his followers should be too much entangled and perplexed, between the express command, and the difficulty of practice. The case of the sabbath was not the same in the jewish state: There was no such difficulty in keeping the appointed day. It was there commanded by God in express language, it was universally acknowledged by the people, taught by all the priests and preachers, and maintained by the high-priest, and all the magistrates of the country, both as a political law of the land, and as a religious ordinance, and was supposed to be publickly practised by all the nation.

Now this tenderness to weak christians is encouraged and exemplified in several instances in the conduct of our blessed Lord, when he was here on earth: He would not enjoin hard and painful practices on young and tender disciples. Mark ii. 18—22. *He preached the things of the gospel unto the people, as they were able to bear them;* Mark iv. 33. John xvi. 12. and in some cases, neither God nor his Son, neither prophets nor apostles, would press such duties too plainly and strongly on the consciences of good men, as would endanger the casting *a snare upon them*, that is, entangling their consciences, as the apostle speaks, 1 *Cor.* vii. 35. or would burden young disciples with too many obligations. I mention this only as a conjecture, and if it be not approved, I am no way fond to support it. See more reasonings in answer to this question in discourse the fourth, " On the Holiness of Places of Worship."

To conclude, since all jewish festivals, new moons, and sabbaths, are abolished by St. Paul's authority, in such express and unlimited language, as may lead many sincere christians to believe that all manner of distinction of days whatsoever, whether jewish or patriarchal, is finished; since the religious observation of days, in the xiv. chapter to the *Romans*, in general, is represented as a matter of doubtful disputation; since the observation of *the Lord's-day* is not built upon any express and plain institution by Christ or his apostles in the New Testament, but rather on examples and probable inferences, and on the reasons and relations of things; I can never pronounce any thing hard or severe upon any fellow-christian who maintains real piety in heart and life, though his opinion may be very different from mine on this subject. Nor does any man, who is humbly and sincerely studious of truth and duty, and desirous to find it, deserve any reproach or censure upon the account of different opinions about meats and days, unless he assume such haughty airs of assurance, as arise far beyond all his evidence and proof, or indulge a persecuting spirit, and reproach his brethren who differ from him.

Whatsoever we do in our distinct practices on these dubious subjects, *let us do it* sincerely *as to the Lord: If we regard a day, let us regard it to the Lord;* and if we neglect it for fear of superstition, let this also be with a desire to honour the Lord, *Rom.* xiv. 6. Let religion be maintained in the life and power of it by every one that names the name of Christ, and let him faithfully pursue those methods which, according to the clearest discoveries of reason and scripture, will be most successful to obtain this end. While upon a just survey of things I am satisfied that the observation of *the Lord's-day*, as a christian sabbath, is most for the service of God, for the honour of my blessed Saviour and his gospel, and for the increase of true religion and godliness, I am obliged to persist in this practice, though I have not so express and evident a command for it, as for many other things in the christian life; but I am persuaded, whosoever will take a faithful review of all that is written in this essay, will be inclined to confess, that I have not maintained this my opinion and practice, without some fair and just appearances both of reason and scripture. There are other questions relating to the Lord's-day, *viz.* When must the christian begin his sabbath, and when must it end? What works of labour may be performed on this day? And how should it be spent or improved, &c. For answer to which, I refer the reader to Dr. Samuel Wright's Treatise on the Lord's-day, and to a sermon a few years ago published on this subject, *viz.* Sermon xxxi. at Berry-street, on the Principal Heads of the Christian Religion.

APPENDIX

TO THE

FIRST DISCOURSE,

SHEWING THE TESTIMONIES OF THE PRIMITIVE FATHERS TO THE LORD'S-DAY.

DOCTOR Young and Mr. Baxter, in their discourses on the Lord's-day, Mr. Placette, in his " Dissertation de Morale et de Theologie," Doctor Wright on the " Observation of the Lord's-day," and several others, have repeated these testimonies of the ancients. And the late learned and honourable Lord King, in his second part of the " Enquiry into the Primitive Churches," has particularly given us this account, which I shall here represent, or rather epitomise, changing some of his translations a little nearer to the words of the original. See page 155. § 5, 6—11.

" That there are particular seasons appointed for public and solemn worship, appears from Clemens Romanus; he says, God hath required us to serve him in the appointed times and seasons: And in two other places of his first epistle, speaks of those " determined and commanded seasons," in which, when we worship, we may be blessed and accepted by him. And Pliny, the heathen, reports, " that the christians in his time met together on *an appointed day*, to sing praises to Christ as to a God, and to bind themselves by a sacrament." Now the chiefest of these appointed times was *the first day of the week*, on which they constantly met, to perform their religious services. So writes Justin Martyr, " On the day that is called Sunday, all that dwell in the cities or the country come together in one place, or for the same end: The writings of the apostles or prophets are read, &c." with other religious exercises. And upon this account those parts of God's public worship are styled by Tertullian, the " Lord's Solemnities, or Dominica Solemnia;" and Cyprian tells us, that the reader, or clerk, " reads on *the Lord's day*:" And Victorinus Petavionensis says, " On *the Lord's day* we go forth to eat bread with giving of thanks," which is the eucharist, or Lord's-supper: And Minucius Felix mentions the the christians assembling to a festival on a solemn day.

" Clemens Alexandrinus, calls it the chief of days, and our rest indeed. " On Sunday we give ourselves to gladness," saith Tertullian: and before him St. Barnabas says, " we keep the eighth day with gladness, on which Jesus arose from the dead:" And the learned author supposes, that Ignatius means the observation of *the Lord's day*, by banishing every appearance of grief and sorrow at that time, insomuch that Tertullian says, " on *the Lord's day* we think it amiss, or sinful, either to fast or to kneel in worship:" And even when he was a Montonist he excepted the sabbaths and the Lord's-day from fasting.

" Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, in his letter to the church of Rome, says, " to-day being *the Lord's day*, we keep it holy, and therein we have read your epistle, and the first epistle of Clemens," who was pastor at Rome. Clemens of Alexandria writes, " that a true christian, according to the commands of the gospel, observes *the Lord's-day*, by casting out all evil thoughts, and entertaining profitable ones, glorifying the resurrection of the Lord thereby."

" That this was done to commemorate the resurrection of the Redeemer, appears from the citations of Barnabas, and Ignatius, and Clemens of Alexandria, in the forecited places: And Justin Martyr relates, " that on Sunday the Christians assembled together, because it was the first day in which God changed the darkness and the chaos, and made the world, and Jesus Christ our Saviour in that day arose from the dead: For on the day before Saturday they crucified him, and the day after Saturday, which is Sunday, he appeared to his apostles and disciples, and taught them those things which we have given you." And Origen advises his auditors " to pray unto God, especially on *the Lord's-day*, which is a commemoration of the passion of Christ: For the resurrection of the Lord is celebrated not only once in a year, but every seven days." Hence it was, that the usual appellation of this day, both by the Greek and Latin churches, was the *Lord's-day*, ημερα κυριακη, or κυριακη alone; and " dies dominicus," or " dominicus alone," of which the author gives many instances from the primitive fathers: And sometimes they called it Sunday, that the heathens might particularly understand what day they meant.

" But though they so far complied with the heathens, as to call this day Sunday, yet I do not find that they ever so far indulged the Jews, as to call it the sabbath-day; for through all their writings, as may be seen especially in Tertullian and Justin Martyr, they violently declaim against sabbatizing, that is, the judaical observation of the seventh-day, and not the Lord's-day, whose sanctification is approved and recommended by Justin Martyr and Tertullian: To which we may add that passage of Ignatius, " let us no longer sabbatize, but keep the Lord's-day, or live according to the Lord's life, on which day our life arose by him:" Or, as it is more fully expressed in his interpolated epistle, " instead of sabbatizing, let every one that loves Christ, keep *the Lord's-day* as a festival, the day on which he arose, the supreme of all days, on which our life arose, and there was a victory obtained over death in or by Christ."

" It is granted, that the eastern churches, in compliance with the jewish converts who were numerous in those parts, sometimes, at least, performed on the seventh-day, the same public religious services that they did on the first day, observing both the one and the other as a festival: But on the contrary, some of the western churches fasted on Saturday, that they might not seem to observe any sabbath with the Jews." Thus far this learned writer; other testimonies have been adduced by other authors, and particularly that of Theophilus of Antioch, " the third day, which taking its name from the resurrection of the Lord, is called the Lord's-day, is the first day of the week:" And some later fathers speak more plainly still. There have been indeed some remarks upon two or three of these citations, which may render the force of the argument, drawn from them, a little doubtful; but most of these testimonies are so plain, that they cannot well be answered, nor fairly turned to any other sense.

THE

SECOND APPENDIX

TO THE

FIRST DISCOURSE.

SINCE this discourse was written, in the year 1733, I have resumed this controversy about the sabbath into an impartial examination, and have read all the papers since written, which have come within my notice. I confess, some of them contain several thoughts of great importance on this subject; but I do not find, upon the whole review, any sufficient reason to change my scheme or sentiments, though I hope I have been enabled to confirm and establish some parts of them, by relieving objections, which I had not met with before, and inserting, here and there, a further illustration.

If the scheme which I have proposed, be deficient in any part of it, so far as I can judge, it must be in these three particulars:

1. In the proof of the patriarchal sabbath to be moral and perpetual.

2. In securing the appointment of the patriarchal sabbath from that general abolition of all manner of sabbaths, and all distinction of days, which St. Paul seems to pronounce in *Rom.* xiv. 5, 6. *Gal.* iv. 9, 10. and *Col.* ii. 16.

3. In proving the Lord's-day to be an actual solemn institution, or command of Christ and his apostles.

Now, if the proofs of these things should appear to be insufficient and defective, and if I were thereby constrained to change the present scheme, upon my closest survey of things, I think I should do it in this manner:

First, I would allow the institution of the patriarchal sabbath to be a mere positive command to the patriarchs, and reinforced by Moses to the jewish nation, even as sacrifices were, or as circumcision, which were both abolished by christianity. And though the law of the sabbath might have many rational expediencies in it, which look like moral duties, yet, perhaps, it is possible, they may not quite arise to an express moral command, and a law of perpetual obligation. So the *talion* law of punishment for injuries received among the Jews, *viz. an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth*, has great appearances in it of rational expediency, and of a moral nature; yet it is not supposed to be made a moral and perpetual law; but, together with all other peculiar laws of the Jews, it was abrogated when the jewish church and state were dissolved.

Secondly, I might then allow the utter abolition of the patriarchal, as well as the jewish sabbath, by the strong and unlimited expressions of St. Paul, concerning the abolition of all distinctions of meats, and days, and sabbaths; even as sacrifices were begun with Adam, and circumcision with Abraham, yet both were finished at the introduction of christianity. But then,

In the third place, it will appear there is so much expediency, and almost a necessity of solemn and certain days appointed for the preservation of all public religion, and for

the celebration of christian worship, that the apostles thought it necessary, by their recommendation, and by their own example, to devote or set apart one day in seven for this purpose; since God, under all his former dispensations, had sanctified and appointed one day in seven for his public worship. And as the *talion* law, and some other parts of the jewish polity, seem to be grounded upon a very reasonable expediency, and may be a proper direction and advice to every state in their making of laws, so the reasonableness and expediency of appointing *one day in seven* for public worship, appearing evident to the apostles from all God's former dispensations, and almost from the nature of things, they gave it as their advice to the christian churches to follow this custom, and practised it themselves.

And since all the former distinctions of days, and their holiness were abolished, and even the observation of *the seventh day*, whereon *God finished his creation*, and since there must be some day agreed upon for public worship, they thought it very proper, that since the great work of the redemption of Christ, which lays a foundation for the new creation, was finished on *the first day of the week* by Christ's resurrection from the dead, that this day should succeed in the place of the day appointed as a memorial of the old creation; and in order to keep both these important matters always within the view of christians, *viz.* both creation and redemption, therefore one day in seven, and particularly the first of the seven, was recommended by the apostles to be their constant day of public worship. And thus the observation of the Lord's-day, of which we have not a plain and incontested proof by way of divine solemn institution in the New Testament, will stand upon the foot of a most reasonable practice, partly borrowed from the institutions of God in all former ages, ever since the creation, and partly from the apostolical advice, recommendation, and example, in the last age of the church.

And if this should appear to be the case, then the only reason which I can think of why so expedient and almost necessary a practice was not made an express and solemn institution, and why it was left rather upon the foot of apostolic advice and example was, that the consciences of good christians, especially while the world was all jewish or heathen, might have some liberty indulged them, and might not be laid under so severe a yoke of bondage, as sometimes such an express institution might happen to lay upon them in jewish or heathen countries. This reason I have mentioned in the discourse itself, as one way of accounting for the obscurity and doubtfulness of such an institution, if the Lord's-day was really instituted.

I say again, if I were to change my present sentiments, so far as I can yet judge, I should fall into these which I have now expressed; but I acknowledge I have not yet seen sufficient reason to depart from the sentiments I have maintained in the discourse itself, nor to relinquish our obligations to observe one day in seven for a day of rest and worship as a perpetual law, and particularly the Lord's-day, as an appointment of Christ by his apostles. *We know but in part*, and we should not be too positive beyond all our evidence. *Whereto we have attained, let us walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing;* and let us be followers of St. Paul, and the other apostles, *and mark*, or imitate *them that walk so, as we have them for our example;* Phil. iii. 16, 17. What appears a sufficient evidence to one man, does not appear so to another: *Let us all follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord;* Heb. xii. 14. *For the kingdom of heaven is not meats, and drinks, and days, but righteousness and peace;* Rom. xiv. 17.

DISCOURSE II.

OF THE TIME OF DAY FOR ADMINISTERING THE LORD'S-SUPPER;

OR, AN ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION,

"MAY IT LAWFULLY BE ADMINISTERED AT NOON?"

THERE have been some pious and devout persons, who would willingly fulfil all their duties of worship precisely according to the appointment of God, who have therefore scrupled to receive the Lord's-supper at noon, because it is called a supper, and it was instituted and celebrated by our Lord Jesus Christ in the evening of the day. I will easily grant, that where the time of any duty is expressly instituted and commanded by God, it ought to be punctually observed; but it doth not necessarily follow, that every circumstance of time or place, which happened to attend any part of worship, when the prophets, apostles, or Christ himself performed it, must be observed also whensoever we perform that worship. John preached and instituted baptism at the river Jordan, with a *hairy garment* upon him, and a *leathern girdle;* but it is not necessary that we should be baptized by the river side, nor that the minister who preaches or performs it, should wear such vestments of hair or leather. Christ prayed at midnight, and on a mountain, he preached from a ship to those on the shore, and ordained his disciples to go forth and preach and pray; but there was no necessity that they should always, or at any time, observe the same hour or place.

In some other essays, I have shewn, that there is a great difference betwixt religious ceremonies, and mere natural circumstances in worship. A religious ceremony is either an action, or a manner or circumstance of action, by which some special honour is designed to be paid to God; and therefore God alone can institute it, who alone can determine what shall be honourable to himself; these religious ceremonies have generally a signification of something spiritual, inward and invisible belonging to them. Mere natural circumstances are such as are necessary, or at least convenient to the performance of acts of worship, considered merely as natural actions, and abstracted from their religious design: Such are time, place, habit, gesture, &c. for no natural action can be put forth but it must be in some time, in some place, in some posture of body; and in public worship with some sort of garments on too. Now many of these, especially under the New Testament, are not precisely determined in christian worship; they have no holy signification in them, and are left to the convenience of each single person, or of each single society or church of Christ. Now let us apply these things to the Lord's-supper, and see how many circumstances, attending the first administration thereof, are instituted ceremonies; and how many of them are mere natural circumstances, which seem to be rather accidental than essential at the first celebration of this ordinance.

First, The time. 1. On Thursday. 2. The thirteenth or fourteenth day of the month. 3. *In the evening.* 4. *After supper.*

Secondly, The place. 1. *A city.* 2. *An upper room.* 3. *A large room.* 4. *A furnished room,* as in Mark xiv. 15, 16. *a large upper room furnished, &c.*

Thirdly, The elements. 1. *Bread,* perhaps one loaf, as 1 *Cor.* x. 17. 2. *Wine,* whether red or white, we know not.

Fourthly, The actions. 1. Blessing the bread and the wine distinctly and apart. 2. Breaking the bread. 3. Distributing. 4. Receiving. 5. Singing a hymn.

Fifthly, The posture of the body, *viz.* sitting with their legs behind them, leaning upon the table with the left elbow, of which see Pool's annotations; *Matt.* xxvi. 20, &c.

Sixthly, The words spoken, *viz. Take, eat; this is my body.—Drink ye all of it, this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins*, which are expressed in several varieties, by the several evangelists, and by the apostle Paul; and therefore the same precise form of words cannot be necessary.

It is evident to the reason of every reader, that some things among the fore-mentioned particulars are necessary to the essence or substance of the ordinance itself.

1. The elements; there must be bread and wine; but whether it is absolutely necessary, that it should be bread made of wheat, and wine made of the juice of the grape, may afford a doubt and scruple. Why not barley or oaten bread, and wine of the juice of currants be sufficient, especially in such regions, or such poor villages, where wheat and grapes are not found, nor hardly to be procured?

2. There must be also the action of blessing the bread and wine, or giving thanks before this sacred feast, and praying for a blessing on it: This was done by our Saviour distinctly twice, that is, both before partaking of the bread, and of the cup. But is a distinct blessing of each element necessary whensoever we celebrate this ordinance? I own I like it best, because it seems as if it were singular and peculiar to this ordinance, and was not done at common meals: But I would not say, it is absolutely necessary at every administration, and that those who bless the bread and wine together do any thing unlawful.

3. There seems to be a necessity of breaking the bread, to signify that the body of our Saviour was broken for our sins; *this is my body which is broken for you.* Yet it may be queried, whether dividing the bread by cutting may not be lawful and proper. For, 1. As breaking bread was the usual way of dividing it among the Jews, so is cutting it among us.—2. Cutting the bread represents his body being wounded with nails and thorns, and a spear as much as breaking. But however that be, it is agreed by all of us, that the bread may be cut almost through, to render the breaking it regularly more convenient and easy, as is usually practised in our churches.

4. The words of the institution should be certainly pronounced, or words of much the same sense, at the distribution of the elements, *viz. This is the body of Christ*, or this is an emblem or figure of the body of Christ, &c. and *this cup is the New Covenant or New Testament in the blood of Christ*, or a sign and seal of the New Testament, or of the New Covenant, in his blood, *which was shed for many for the remission of sins.* But it is by no means necessary to say always the very same words. For, it is certain, this ordinance was celebrated or performed by our Saviour but once, and yet the several evangelists differ in their relation of the words used by Christ; and St. Paul, in his account of it, differs from them all. Therefore it is evident, that the Spirit of Christ in writing the New Testament, never designed to confine us precisely to one set of words, or the same phrases, but only to the same sense. Yet further:

5. The elements must be distributed that all may partake: But whether the pastor must distribute them to the hand of every communicant; whether the deacons, who serve tables, may distribute them, or whether they may be distributed throughout the congregation by the communicants from hand to hand, this is not any where determined certainly, and is no evident part of the institution itself, and I think it may be practised any way.

In the last place, a table-gesture was the mode in which Christ administered, and his disciples did first receive this ordinance; and I think a table-gesture is the most proper to represent a supper, or a religious feast and holy communion. But I dare not say, this is so much an instituted and necessary part of the ordinance, that it cannot be profitably celebrated without it. God forbid, that I should pronounce this sacrament null and vain to all the foreign protestant churches, most of which receive it standing, or to the English episcopal church, who receive it on their knees! And let it be remembered, the jewish table-gesture was very different from ours, and yet we have changed it for sitting.

But as for some other of the circumstances which first attended this ordinance, it is impossible they should be necessary to our constant and repeated celebration of it. Does any christian think it necessary, that this sacrament should never be administered but in a large upper room? Is it not lawful nor valid, if performed in a little room and on a ground-floor? Again, our Saviour administered this ordinance to twelve persons who were all men, and just after another supper; but can any man think that we must never administer it, but where there are just twelve men to receive it, and that no woman must ever partake of it; and that we must always eat another supper before we receive this?

Yet further, what christian ever thought it necessary, that it should be performed on the same day of the week, that is Thursday, and on the same day of the month too, as it was first instituted, that is, the thirteenth or fourteenth of March? Then it can be celebrated but once in five or six years, when the same day of the month happens on the same day of the week. And I believe, we all think it necessary to receive it oftener, than on the fourteenth of March only, even if that could possibly fall on the Lord's-day every year. Yet again, if the Lord's-supper must be always administered in the evening, it cannot be always at the same hour of the day as we compute our hours in England. The evening hour or sun-set, which is six o'clock in March and September, will be complete night in December, and complete day in June. And thus if we receive the Lord's-supper every month, it will be sometimes perfect day, and sometimes perfect night, if we keep to the same hour in which our Lord administered it. Besides, St. Paul did not celebrate this ordinance always in the evening. See Acts xx. 7. *He continued his preaching at* Troas *till midnight.* Then Eutychus fell down asleep, was taken up dead, was restored to life, and after all this *they broke bread*, and continued in discourse till break of day. And the primitive christians often celebrated this sacrament "horis ante lucanis," that is, "before break of day," as the ancients inform us, most probably for fear of being disturbed by their persecuting enemies. Thus the conveniency of performance must determine the season or hour of administration, as well as the place and other circumstances.

I confess it is usually called the Lord's-supper, because it was in the evening that Christ instituted it, just after the jewish passover, which was a supper; but let it be observed, that supper was a very considerable, if not a chief meal, in many countries in those days, as dinner is now amongst us. Therefore, if we may change the posture of leaning at table into sitting upright, because it is our present table-posture, why may we not as well change supper-time, which was their chief meal, for the season of our chief meal, that is at noon? Especially since we cannot find that the precise time is made any part of the worship itself, or has any holy or religious signification in it. *Let us stand fast then in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and not be entangled with yokes of bondage;* Gal. v. 1. nor impose hours and seasons upon our consciences, which we cannot find the word of God has imposed, but which Christ has left indifferent to the free choice and conveniency of his churches.

DISCOURSE III.

THE HOLINESS OF PLACES OF WORSHIP,

Considered in a Sermon at the Opening of a New Meeting-house, October 20, 1737.

EXODUS XX. 24.

IN ALL PLACES WHERE I RECORD MY NAME, I WILL COME UNTO THEE, AND I WILL BLESS THEE.

THESE words were spoken to Moses at Mount Sinai, and sent by him to the nation of Israel, just after the great God had pronounced the law of the ten commandments from heaven in lightning and thunder: And while the people lay under awful impressions of this *fiery law*, God takes further care to secure the honours of his own name and worship, and to appoint some of the earliest modes and ceremonies of it. Verses 23, 24. *Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall you make to you gods of gold: An altar of earth shalt thou make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt-offerings and thy peace-offerings, and I will meet thee and bless thee.* But before I come to explain or improve this promise, I ask leave to make these three remarks on the connexion of these words with the context.

I. As the preface to those ten commands which God spoke to the people in thunder, was this, *I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the house of bondage;* Exodus xx. 2. therefore hear and obey; so the preface to those following commands which he sent to them by Moses, *verse* 22. was this; I the Lord your God *have talked with you from heaven*, therefore attend and practise. A God of such mercy and of such Majesty, who brings his people out of a long and painful bondage, and then pronounces his own laws in fire and thunder, ought to be heard and obeyed by sinful, feeble creatures. Divine Majesty and divine mercy united, carry with them a powerful demand of attention and obedience.

II. As the blessed God begins his orders to his people by his own voice, with securing his own honour and worship in the first and second commandments; in the same manner he begins his message to them by Moses, by a sort of explication or comment on these two first commands; *Ye shall have no other gods with me*, or besides me; no gods of gold or silver; and ye shall worship me by sacrifices upon an altar made of earth. Though God was just going to direct them to build a glorious tabernacle with altars of brass and gold, yet, while ye are in this moving and travelling state, before I have built me a house or a mansion to dwell in, ye shall worship me, saith he, upon an altar of earth, such as may be easily set up or took down without expence of time or money: This shall be more acceptable to me than altars of hewn or polished stone, with all the ornaments and fineries which you can contrive. It is God's own appointment of the forms and instruments of his own worship, that makes that worship acceptable to him, whether the materials be of earth or gold.

III. When God had briefly mentioned this matter of duty to the people, he adds a rich promise of grace. *In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee,*

and I will bless thee. St. Paul observes, Eph. vi. 2. that *honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land, is the first commandment with promise;* and a few hours or minutes after that command was given, this order to worship God according to his own appointment, was sent to them; and it may be properly called the second commandment with promise; and a glorious promise it is, indeed, of the presence of God with his people, to encourage to an exact and punctual performance of all his institutions in their worship.

Now let me take a short survey of these words of promise, and explain them briefly in general terms. By God's recording his own name, we are here to understand, his appointing any thing relating to his honour by his own authority, or his giving some notice how or where he would be worshipped by men; what place he has fixed, or what forms of adoration he hath stamped with his own name and authority: And wheresoever these his institutions are celebrated in all their appointed forms, there the name of God is recorded. By his own coming to his people, which he has here promised, we must understand his favourable discoveries of himself to those who worship him in the place and manner which he ordains; and this he has often done by some signals of his own gracious presence with them. He will let them know that he approves them, favours them, and resides amongst them. By his blessing his people, he intends to signify, that he will not only accept the worship which is paid to him according to his own appointment, but he will make their attendances upon him effectual for some blessed ends: He will bestow those blessings of the covenant of grace, which are sought for by his people in their attendance on his worship.

Now that we may raise such meditations from these words, as may suit our present purpose of beginning to wait upon God in a new-erected place of worship, permit me to lead your thoughts along in order by the following propositions:

I. "That God, who has ordained his own worship, together with the special modes and forms of it, has often in ancient times appointed the particular place of his worship, on single or special occasions." It was while Adam tarried in paradise after his fall, and before he was driven out of the garden of Eden, that he was doubtless taught and required to offer sacrifices of beasts; for since flesh was not then appointed to be eaten, what could it be but the skins of beasts which were offered in sacrifice, out of which God made coats or garments for him and his wife? And hereby paradise itself, where the first sin was committed, was the appointed place for that sort of worship by sacrifice, by which the first typical atonement should be made for sin. But it does not appear, that there was any continuance of that appointment more than for one season of worship: For our first parents were quickly driven out of that delightful garden. Noah, when he came out from the ark, at the order of God, upon Mount Ararat, where the ark rested, there he offered sacrifices, and that doubtless by divine appointment; for *the Lord smelled a sweet savour* in them, and gave him a promise that *he would not again curse the ground;* Gen. viii. 20, 21.

It was by the special appointment of God, in a certain spot of the land of Canaan, that Abraham sacrificed to God *a heifer, a goat, and a ram, a turtle dove, and a young pigeon, and divided them asunder;* and there God condescended to pass between these pieces, under the emblem of *a smoking furnace and a burning lamp,* and *made a covenant* with his servant; *Gen.* xv. 9—17. It was also upon Mount Moriah that Abraham received orders from heaven to offer his own son Isaac *as a burnt-offering,* and there he

received a further blessing from the Lord, and the promise of the great Messiah to be derived from his seed, *in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed;* Gen. xxii. 2, 17, 18. It was at Mount Sinai, that God ordered the nation of Israel to worship him, when he had brought them forth from Egyptian bondage; *Exodus* iii. 12. and again he appointed the "young men of the seed of Israel, to sacrifice oxen unto himself under the hill, with an altar and twelve pillars, and made a covenant with the people;" *Exodus* xxiv. 5—8. So in following times, Gideon, and Samuel, and David, under inspiration, were required sometimes to offer particular sacrifices, and pay solemn worship unto God, in places different from the general orders, which were given to all Israel for the public worship of the nation; otherwise, they would not have dared to have done it, nor would their sacrifices have been accepted, by such evident and illustrious testimonies from heaven, as some of them received. These few instances make it evident, that God sometimes appointed a particular place for his own worship.

II. "Though the great God prescribed to several persons the particular spot of ground on which he would be worshipped on single and special occasions; yet when he appointed any special place for his own worship in the solemn returns of it at stated seasons, it was only to the nation of Israel, who were a peculiar people, chosen to himself from among the rest of the nations." This he did first when there was a tabernacle built for him in the wilderness: For though that was a moveable house or building, yet it was always at the door of the tabernacle that the brazen altar was to stand, where alone sacrifices were to be offered; *Lev.* xvii. 4, 8, 9. and incense was to be burnt no where, at stated seasons, but only in the tabernacle on the altar of gold; *Exodus* xxx. 1—10. When the Israelites were come to Canaan, Shiloh, in the tribe of Ephraim, was the first appointed place for the settlement of the ark of God, and the tabernacle, and there only were sacrifices to be offered. Joshua xviii. 1. *And the whole congregation assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle there.* Now, that this was done by divine appointment, see Jer. vii. 12. *Go ye now to my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first.* And this practice of worshipping God in Shiloh was repeated by the ancient saints at stated seasons. So Elkanah and Hannah worshipped God there yearly; 1 *Sam.* i. 3.

In some ages after this, the tabernacle, with the brazen altar, was set up in a high place in Gibeon, upon what occasion, or at what time, is not known: The ark which had been carried long before into the camp of Israel, and taken captive by the Philistines, was returned and brought to Mount Zion at Jerusalem. When David carried the ark to Zion, which was called his city, because he had taken it from the Jebusites and fixed his own palace there, yet he left the tabernacle of Moses with the brazen altar at Gibeon, and priests were appointed to sacrifice there. See 1 *Chron.* xv. 1—3. and xvi. 1, 37.* &c. And though sacrifices were offered in Zion on that occasion, yet, doubtless, David did this by divine appointment; for he was often directed by divine inspiration, and was accepted of God in these services. God himself says, he would dwell in Zion, *for he had desired it;* Psalm cxxxii. 13, 14. At the ark in Zion was the most sensible and glorious residence of God on the mercy-seat; this was the most illustrious part of

* Though I cannot find any express order for setting up the tabernacle in Gibeon, yet possibly there was such an order; because God shewed his acceptance of Solomon when he offered a thousand sacrifices there, by appearing to him, and promising him wisdom for his royal office. Compare 2 *Chron.* i. 3. with 1 *Kings* iii. 4, 5. Though other high places were forbidden, that might be appointed.

all the building of Moses, and conveyed by God's own order to the city of David. *Thither* all *the tribes went up* to worship in David's time; *Psalm* cxxii. 4. and cxxxii. 13. And, upon this account, Zion was mentioned as the sacred and appointed place of worship so often in the Psalms of David: And these Psalms being used in jewish worship, the same name and language was continued, even after a temple was built, and used by the prophets in following ages, to signify the place of God's residence and of his worship. And Zion was the word they used to represent and typify the church of God in future ages.

When Solomon was ordered to build that glorious temple in Jerusalem, it was upon another mountain, even Mount Moriah, not far off from Zion; 2 *Chron.* iii. 1. and *the ark of the covenant was brought up thither out of the city of David, which is Zion;* 1 Kings viii. 1. And this temple was the constant fixed place of the worship of the Lord for many generations, even till the days of the Messiah, or the end of the levitical dispensation. Thus the appointed place of the jewish worship, in its special forms, and at the stated returning seasons, was the tabernacle or the ark which was formed by Moses, or the temple built by Solomon, from the time of their departure from Egypt to the age of the Messiah. There the daily sacrifices of the two lambs were to be offered, there the burning lamps were to be kindled, there the sweet incense was to smoke towards heaven every morning and every evening; *Exodus* xxix. 38. and xxx. 7, 8. There God appointed his own worship with a special uniformity in the whole scheme, and a peculiar harmony betwixt the several parts of it, to hold forth by way of type and emblem, the beauty and glory of the church invisible, worshipping the great and invisible God.

III. "While these appointed places of worship continued to be approved of God, they were called *holy places;* not only because God dwelt there, but because God claimed them as his own, and would have them solemnly separated for his own peculiar service: And he appointed also what special respect or regard the people should pay to them in testimony of their holiness." When God appeared to Moses in the burning bush on the mount, he commanded him to *put off his shoes from his feet, for the place,* says he, *whereon thou standest is holy ground;* Exodus iii. 5. that is, because God was there. When God manifested his presence in lightning and thunder, and thick smoke on Mount Sinai, to pronounce his law from heaven, the mountain was to have *bounds* or rails fixed *round about it, that neither man nor beast might touch it;* Exodus xix. 23. Heb. xii. 20. When he fixed his visible dwelling amongst his people Israel, even before they came to be settled in the land of Canaan, as well as after, there were various degrees of holiness assigned to places, according to their nearness to God, or the visible token of his presence. When he appointed the orders of the camp of Israel, this camp, though moveable, had some degrees of holiness in it; for God represents himself as dwelling in the midst of them, and walking among them, therefore no unclean thing was to be left public and visible there; *Deut.* xxiii. 14.

When Moses was instructed and required to erect the tabernacle, it was to stand in the middle of the camp: There was the open court, surrounded with curtains, whither only the priests and the levites might come to perform the services of the sanctuary, and the daily sacrifices which God appointed. In this court stood the laver and altar of burnt-offerings: In this court stood the tabernacle itself, a covered building; the first part whereof was called the holy place, where only the priests came who performed daily

services: There stood the golden candlestick, the altar of incense, and the table of shew-bread; the inner part of it was called the holy of holies, where God dwelt in a bright cloud; there, none but the high priest might enter, and that once a year on the great day of atonement; *Exodus* xxvi. 33. When they were settled in the promised land, the land itself was called holy, for it was the Lord's; *Lev.* xxv. 27. *Zech.* vii. 12. He claimed it for his own; *Jer.* ii. 7. The towns and cities of it were called holy cities; *Isaiah* lxiv. 10. No man was suffered to inhabit within the gates of them, but who became a proselyte of the true religion, so far as to renounce all idols, and to worship the God of Israel only, and who took upon him, as is generally said, the observation of the seven precepts of Noah, about murder and eating blood, &c.

Jerusalem was peculiarly the holy city, or the holy mountain; for in David or Solomon's time, and afterwards, the mountains of Zion and Moriah were included in it. David brought the ark of God into Zion, and Solomon built the temple on Mount Moriah, which by that means were made holy ground. The temple in general contained in it many courts and buildings, whose holiness had very different degrees, as learned men have observed; and the chief of them were formed according to the tabernacle of Moses, but others were not so.

1. There was the court of the gentiles, where the heathens and the proselytes of the gate were permitted to walk. Whether this was distinguished in Solomon's time, is a doubtful enquiry; it is most probable it was not.

2. The court of the people, or the court of Israel, into which no uncircumcised person was suffered to enter: It was only for those who were originally of the seed of Israel, or were circumcised and entered into complete judaism, and became the proselytes of righteousness, or the proselytes of the temple. The tabernacle of Moses had not these two courts: The camp of Israel, and the country round about, served instead of them.

3. There was the court of the priests and levites, who performed the worship of sacrifices; this was according to the forms and orders of the tabernacle of Moses: And therefore in this court stood the brazen altar and the laver; the one to signify atonement for sin, by sacrifice, and the other to denote real purification of heart, by washing, which are both necessary, in order to our appearance before God. All these three courts were open to the sky; and they had afterwards, perhaps, some other divisions made in them; 2 *Chron.* xx. 5. as there were, originally, galleries formed on pillars to secure persons from the weather, as well as chambers of lodging for the levites, where strangers might not lodge; *Nehem.* xiii. 5, 7, 8.

4. The sanctuary, properly so called, or the holy place, wherein stood the altar of incense, the table of shew-bread, and the candlestick: And I question whether any priests were usually permitted to enter therein, but those whose turn it was to light the lamps, to place and remove the loaves of bread, or to burn incense.

5. The innermost sanctuary, or holy of holies, which was all overlaid with gold, was divided from the holy place by a veil of fine linen. Here stood the ark, and the covering of it, which was called the mercy-seat, on which God appeared to reside in a cloud of glory: And hither no person whatsoever might enter *but the high priest only, and that but once a year, with the blood* of the sacrifice, and with incense, on the great atoning day. The temple of Solomon, as well as the tabernacle of Moses, or the residence of the ark in Zion, were called *the beauty of holiness;* Psalm xxix. 2. xcvi. 9. and cx. 3. There David calls on men to come and worship God; there *the beauty of his holiness* and

the harmony of his glories were discovered to men. All the parts of the temple were so far holy, that no civil or common business of life was to be transacted there. Our Saviour gives occasion to St. Mark, in his history, to describe it; Mark xi. 15—17. *When he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves; and would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple; saying, Is it not written, my house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves.*

Thus then was the holiness of places duly observed, when no persons entered into them, but who were appointed of God, and when nothing was done in them of the common affairs of life, and that out of special reverence to the great Jehovah, the God of Israel, who had chosen these places for a visible habitation to himself, and had made them holy. Let it be also observed, that there were several particular forms and ceremonies appointed for the consecration or dedication of these places unto God: Many sacrifices were offered by Moses and Aaron on this occasion, as you may read at large in Exodus and Leviticus, and in the first and second books of Chronicles. The great God was invoked by David and Solomon by prayer to enter into these holy places as his own habitation or place; Psalm cxxxii. 1. *Arise, O Lord, into thy rest; thou and the ark of thy strength.* Psalm xxiv. 7. *Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in.*

It may be noted here, mankind is ever prone to superstition, and wheresoever the great God, for wise purposes, affixes any holiness to places or things, by peculiarising them to his own worship and service, men are very fond of adding some other forms and appearances of holiness to God's own appointments: Their synagogues, their schools of instruction, and their prayer-houses, which were built only by the prudence of men, as we shall shew afterwards, had distinct degrees of holiness imputed to them by the superstitious Jews, which God never appointed.

IV. "When it pleased God to appoint particular places for his worship, it was always for positive revealed worship, to be paid him by special forms and ceremonies, such as incense, sacrifices, &c. and he excluded other places from that honour; yet he never appointed a certain place for any part of natural worship, with the exclusion of other places."

If you turn to all the texts before cited, where God ordained any certain spot of ground, or any building, either for single acts of worship, or for the stated repetitions and returns of it, it was still for sacrifice, for incense, or for musical instruments, &c. that is, for some positive or ceremonious part of religion; but the natural worship of prayers and praises offered to God, or attending to the ministry of his word, whereby we might learn his will and our duty, was never confined to any certain place. Though there were no sacrifices offered in the captivity of Babylon, because they had not the holy ark, or temple, or tabernacle there; yet Daniel prayed continually, and Ezekiel preached or prophesied to the captives afar off from Judea and Jerusalem, and all the holy places, which had been there appointed and sanctified. And though we do not read of their singing there, that was not from any danger of singing upon unconsecrated ground, but from the desolation of their circumstances, which required tears rather than music, and because they would not give

occasion for new insults and scoffs from their barbarous enemies. The cxxxviii. Psalm itself was a divine song, which was written on that occasion, and probably might be sung there in private, though not when the Babylonians were in company.

It is granted, indeed, that all the parts of natural worship, such as hearing the word of God, offering prayers and devout songs of praise to him, were also required, or rather implied and supposed, often if not always, to attend these positive institutions and revealed ceremonies at the temple or tabernacle. The house of God is always *a house of prayer;* Matt. xxi. 13. And God, who dwells in Zion, is said *to inhabit the praises of Israel;* Psalm xxii. 3. But no part of mankind were ever forbid to offer this sort of worship in other places; no, not in the strictest times of the jewish religion. When sacrifices and all such ceremonies were confined to the tabernacle and the temple, still the people might meet together to pray to God, or to praise him, or to hear his word in any place whatsoever, through all the land of Canaan, when it did not interfere with the appointed duties of the tabernacle, or the temple: Or otherwise, the people in so large a country would have had but very little public worship among them, if all the nation had no other place to attend on it, but the temple or tabernacle.

Thence came the custom of erecting synagogues, or convenient houses, for jewish assemblies to worship God. These were built in many places of the land of Israel; some hundreds are said to be in Jerusalem itself: And these were not of peculiar divine appointment, because only natural worship was performed in them.* It was the prudence of good men agreeing to wait on God in the practice of natural religion, prayer, praise, and hearing his word, which built such convenient places for worshipping assemblies to meet in their several towns and cities. There they came together every sabbath, and worshipped God; Acts xv. 21. *Moses, of old time, hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath-day.* How old or ancient these times were, is hard to determine. It is highly probable, that synagogues were erected in the land of Canaan long before the captivity of Babylon. The lxxiv. Psalm speaks of them, that the enemy had not only *cast fire into the sanctuary, and defiled the dwelling-place of the name of God to the ground,* that is, the temple; but they had also *burned up all the synagogues of God in the land.* These places of worship were greatly encouraged and honoured by our Saviour himself, preaching often in them; *Matt.* iv. 23. *Luke* iv. 15.

There were also prayer-houses, built in mountains and solitary places by the Jews, in which people might retire, and travellers might pray to God in secret, free from disturbance, and perhaps from the inconveniences of the weather also: These were called by a Greek name, "proseuchai," and were also approved by Christ, for he used them for this holy purpose; Luke vi. 12. *He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in* a prayer-house of God, as the Greek word most properly implies. Now, these examples, which are so encouraged by our Saviour and his apostles, as well as from the reason and necessity of the thing, give us abundant encouragement to build convenient places for public worship under the christian dispensation.† And blessed be God, who has given this church and congregation, in the midst of which we are now worshipping,

* Though the law of Moses, and the writings of the prophets, were read weekly in the synagogues, which were all revelations from God, yet whensoever God has revealed his mind and will in writing, it is but a piece of natural divine service, to read and publish this among the people. The light of nature teaches this, and the law of nature requires it.

† The christian churches, and their constitution and worship, is agreed by learned men to come much nearer to the assemblies and worship in jewish synagogues, than to that of the temple.

such a convenient building as this is, and who inspired the hearts of his people with liberality answerable to such an occasion.

V. "When God was pleased to put an end to this jewish dispensation, and all that typical scheme of worship, with its forms and ceremonies, by the coming of the Messiah, he put an end also to all the holiness of places." He removed his dwelling from *places made with hands,* and dwelt bodily in the Man Jesus Christ as his noblest tabernacle. The substance being come, the shadows must fly away; for all these things were only *figures for the time then present.* And God therefore entirely finished all that shadowy frame of things which he erected for the jewish church, and abolished his own ancient ordinances, which affixed holiness to places, to mountains, or cities, or edifices,* and confined his worship to any particular place: Nor does our blessed Saviour require or permit christians to make new holy places of their own; *John* iv. 21. *The hour cometh,* saith our Saviour, *when ye shall* be confined to *worship God the Father neither in this mountain,* Gerizim, which you Samaritans suppose to be holy, *nor at Jerusalem,* which God appointed to be the holy place for his own worship: But the time comes, and is just now at hand, *when true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth;* without regard to particular places; *for it is such the Father seeketh to worship him:* Such persons shall find acceptance of him, wheresoever they pay their homage to him, without any distinction of places. Every place, where God is sincerely honoured, shall be as holy for this purpose, as Jerusalem ever was. This is true christian liberty.

And this is the sense of the primitive christian churches, as you may see in the writings of the ancient fathers. Clemens Alexandrinus saith thus: "Every place in truth is holy, where we receive any knowledge of God;" and Justin Martyr, who was before him, writes, "All the sacrifices that are offered to God through the name of Christ, in every place of the earth, by the christians, God accepts them, and witnesses that they are well-pleasing to him:" And therefore, though, in times of peace, they had convenient and fixed places for public worship, yet in times of persecution, as Dionysius of Alexandria saith, "Our place of assembly is a field, a desert, a ship, a public inn, or a prison," or wherever they could securely join together in religious service.

When God appointed a church for himself in one nation, he appointed a general place of worship there, to which all the males of the tribes of Israel were obliged to resort, and pay their homage to him *three times a year.* But our Lord Jesus has now sent his apostles through the nations to gather a church to himself from among all the inhabitants of the world; and he has appointed, shall I say, a large and extensive temple for himself, that is, the whole earth, wheresoever any true worshippers are found in it. Our divines generally suppose that glorious prophecy; *Isaiah* lxvi. 1, 2. must refer to the days of the gospel, because of many plain expressions in the context relating to that state: And we

* It was a vain and idle imagination among the popish devotees, that holiness still belongs to those towns, or spots of ground, or buildings, such as Judea and Jerusalem, where David lived and worshipped, where Christ and his apostles travelled and preached, and to the sepulchre and the garden wherein the body of Jesus was buried. This foolish notion worked up by the popes and priests of those blind ages, sent out thousands from their native homes, sauntering over sea and land in silly pilgrimages to Jerusalem. This set the princes of Europe on fire with frantic zeal to recover the holy land, and those holy places out of the hands of the Turkish powers who possessed them. This was the spring of those croisades or holy wars, to which the pope sent kings and their armies, one age after another, on a ridiculous errand, to the destruction of many thousand lives of their subjects, and the utter neglect of their own important affairs at home. And if Tasso, the Italian poet, had not been a great bigot, he would never have employed and abused a noble muse to celebrate the knight-errantry of such wild attempts and achievements: Nor would Casimire Sarbiewski, that admirable Polish genius, have wasted such sublime odes in giving alarms to christian princes, at the beginning of the last century, to pursue this impertinence of the holy war.

think that all the holiness that belonged formerly to places of worship, is foretold to be abolished there. *Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my foot-stool: Where is the house that ye build unto me; and where is the place of my rest?* All these heavens and earth *hath my hand made, and those things have been*, that is, houses and temples for me to rest in; they have been, saith the Lord, but their time is finished now; and to *this man will I look*, and regard this worshipper, *who is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word*, wheresoever he shall call upon me and worship me.

The first martyr Stephen, when he cites this very place of the prophet in his speech to the Jews, *Acts* vii. 49. designs to let them know, that the holiness of their temple, in which they boasted, was just at an end: *The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands;* his habitation is not confined to material buildings. The gospel in its religious worship, comes much nearer to natural religion in this respect, that there are very few special rites and ceremonies that belong to it: And God sees there is no need of appointing any particular place for christian worship, since we have but these two plain ceremonies to perform, *baptism* and *the Lord's-supper.*

Since the great God has been pleased to put down and abolish the holy and consecrated places of his own appointment, I cannot find the text wherein he has given to men any order or authority to pretend to make other places holy. Mortal men can never put holiness in ground or buildings, where God has not put it. No pompous ceremonies, no solemn forms, no magnificent appearances, no gaudy or golden solemnities can sanctify any place unto God and his worship, or make it more holy than it was before: And whatsoever fooleries and ridiculous rites or notions are found in the church of Rome in this case,* I am well persuaded our wiser brethren of the Church of England do not, cannot believe them to be of any value or importance, in order to make the worship more acceptable to God. They are of opinion indeed, that it is a very proper thing for christians to build large and convenient edifices, where considerable assemblies may meet together to worship God in and through Jesus Christ: They suppose, that nothing indecent should be done in these buildings, to bring them into contempt, and that they should usually be separated and kept for the sacred purposes of worship, for which they are built: And I think the protestant dissenters are of the same opinion. They believe also, that when a commodious building is erected for the worship of God, it is a very decent thing to begin the worship at that place, with solemn prayer or addresses to God, that the solemnities of the christian religion, which are performed there, may find acceptance of the God of heaven through Jesus Christ their Saviour; and that the christian ordinances, there celebrated, may be blessed to the edification of the souls of men: Nor do the dissenters differ from them in this practice, for we are met together here, this day, for this very purpose.

It is true, the conformists have been pleased to call this the consecration of their churches; but though the dissenters use not that name, when they begin to worship in their new-erected buildings or meeting-houses, yet they generally suppose and intend

* It is no wonder, that the church of Rome should pretend to make common things and places holy, by the consecration of their bishops, when every priest, among them, assumes a power to turn a bit of senseless paste into the holy body and blood of our blessed Saviour. Their ceremonies at the consecration of a church are so numerous and theatrical, that it would be very tedious to recite them: I shall only therefore, for a specimen, present you with a short abstract of the form of ceremonies, for blessing the first stone of any church, that is to be built, and this may be done by a common priest, provided he has power given him by the bishop. See the Appendix at the end of this discourse.

these buildings should be set apart chiefly for this end, nor should be usually employed for mean, or dishonourable, or ridiculous purposes in human life, without some appearing necessity of it, or some very great convenience to be obtained thereby, which might overbalance the mere considerations of decency and propriety. Reason and humanity seem to dictate this separation or appointment of buildings for public worship. Should the senate-house where our lawgivers assemble be used for a theatre or droll-house, or for idle puppet-shews? Should the council-board be made a drinking or gaming table when the king is absent? Or the presence-chamber be an entertaining room for public mimics and scaramouches to divert the mob, as soon as his majesty is departed? Or is it proper that a place, built for divine service, should be alternately employed for the fooleries of human life to appear in, when the worship is ended? This would unite ideas which are extremely distant, and blend together solemnity and ridicule. This would too nearly join things divine and jocular, and mingle the images of such scenes in the fancy, as should for ever be kept separate.

If such things have been ever done, surely it has not been matter of choice, but necessity, when the worshippers have been constrained to meet in such rooms, having no fitter place of worship near at hand. The common prudence of mankind, and natural decency in general, would seem to forbid it. When we erect a house for the worship of God, we would not choose to couple it with any ludicrous or dishonourable ideas. But though our friends here have built this house purely for divine worship, and we are all of us engaged this day in addressing the Majesty of heaven, that, when the congregation attends here, he would condescend to favour them with his divine presence and blessing; yet all this human prudence, this natural decency, and all these prayers, do not amount to the sanctifying the spot of ground or the building, so as to make it holier than the rest, or put any such holiness upon it as belonged to the jewish tabernacle or temple, where it was sinful either to work or play. It must be confessed indeed, that some of the forms of expression which have been used in consecrations, and applied to new-erected chapels and churches in our nation, do carry too evident airs or appearances of superstition, as though men could put holiness into them: But we suppose, that these things were some of the relics of the popish religion, that were not quite swept away when the reformation brought in better christianity. How few wise men are there, amongst all our brethren in the national church, that would now a-days approve of the ridiculous ceremonies, rites, and gestures, whereby Archbishop Laud, heretofore, consecrated Creed-church, near Aldgate, in London, and several others?*

To make this agreement of sentiments between us and our brethren yet further appear, let these three things be considered:

1. That many of the public churches, notwithstanding all their consecrations, are frequently used by the approbation of the minister, the churchwardens, and the whole parish, for other purposes than religious worship; such as the assembling of the vestrymen to choose parish officers and settle parish taxes, the choice of aldermen and common-council-men in the city of London, in which they too often find such quarrels and mutual reproaches, such railing, such fraud, and falsehood in procuring votes at elections, as is very improper to be indulged, or even the probability of it admitted in a place, which has any real holiness in it. How many other secular affairs are sometimes transacted in

* A short abstract of this is found in Mr. Neal's History of the Puritans, vol. ii. p. 219. and a longer account in Rushworth's Collections.

churches in the country, and in churchyards too, though they are consecrated, because they are large and convenient? How many consecrated churches are appointed to teach little children their A, B, C, and all the rudiments of learning in them? And are not boys often indulged to play in churches, while men meet to ring bells there merely for diversion, or for any trivial purpose? Surely these places are not supposed to have much real holiness in them, where these things are continually practised, and universally connived at, if not publicly allowed.

2. Consider how many chapels in the nation are erected and used for religious worship, without any consecration at all: And the divine service is justly supposed to be as effectually performed, and as much accepted of God, as if it had enjoyed all the ceremonious formalities in the world to consecrate it. Nor are any former impurities supposed to render a convenient place unfit for divine worship, though there have been no purifying rites and forms to sanctify it. Has the royal banquetting-house, which was erected in the last age, and where our former kings celebrated other sort of festivals, than those of the apostles and martyrs, has it been ever consecrated by any of these forms, in order to make it a holy place for divine worship, which is regularly and constantly performed there in the present age?

3. I could never learn, that the consecration of new churches and chapels has any certain set of ceremonies appointed for it by the laws of the land. There is indeed an ancient form preserved, whereby Lancelot Andrews, bishop of Winchester, in the year 1617, consecrated a small chapel at Peartree near Southampton, which I have several times seen, and gazed at it, as that very building which gives us the model for our present consecrations. But I have not found any sufficient authentic acts of the kings or parliaments of England, whereby this is required or made necessary.* Upon the whole then, I cannot find any great difference between the sentiments of the dissenters and the conformists, of our age, in this point, among wise and thinking persons. They seem to agree, there is no such holiness in places, as weaker minds imagine.

VI. "Since there is no particular place appointed of God where christians must worship him; then we cannot learn, where he has *recorded his name* any other way, but by the worship itself and its entire conformity to God's own ordinance and appointment." God resides in the midst of his people, wheresoever his divine institutions are celebrated, according to his mind and will. *Psalm* lxviii. 18. compared with *Eph.* iv. 8. inform us, that when our Saviour *ascended on high, he received gifts for men*, and he diffused those gifts to make *pastors and teachers*, to build up this church amongst the gentile nations, who, at that time, were called the rebellious; and he did it for this reason, "*That the Lord God might dwell amongst them*, as he did in Sinai, as he did in Sion:" And where these pastors or teachers celebrate his own ordinances, in their purity, there the great God condescends to dwell, and *records his name* there.

Time and place are necessary circumstances of all human actions, whether natural, civil, or religious. If God has appointed the time, let us keep to his appointments, and let us worship him one day in seven, according to his original institution; and let that be on *the first day of the week*, when our Lord rose from the dead, and his apostles directed the churches to attend on their exalted Saviour in religious worship. But if he has not

* This form of the consecration of churches is found in Bishop Sparrow's book, called "A Rationale of the Common Prayer," in octavo; and in the same author's "Collection of the Articles, Canons, &c." of the Church of England, in quarto.

appointed the place, we are left to the best use of our reason and christian prudence, to raise our synagogues in the most convenient ground, and to agree upon our meetings or assemblies for the worship of God, where it may best suit the convenieney of the church, or the greatest part of the worshippers. And since God has appointed no particular spot of ground, no special building for this purpose, under the gospel, we may assure ourselves, that whosoever worships him in spirit and in truth, will find acceptance in every nation, and in every place.

The parts of natural worship are always the same, throughout all ages, that is, to attend to what God speaks, both in the dictates of reason and in his word, read or explained; to offer up our prayers to him for the mercies we want, and to celebrate his praises, and shew our thankfulness; these are accepted of God in all places. And as for the two ceremonies of *baptism*, and the *Lord's-supper*, since they are attached to no particular place by the appointment of our Saviour, let us perform these solemnities in any convenient place, according to his will, and there God will reside among his people. Wheresoever the children of men separate themselves from the wicked world, and devote themselves to God in and through Jesus the Mediator, and practise pure and undefiled religion, there is Sion under the gospel; there will he take up his habitation and his rest, *for he hath desired it;* Psalm exxxii. 13, 14. There is *the temple of the living God, for he hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people;* 2 Cor. vi. 16, 17. Here indeed a question may arise, "How shall we know with any certainty, where God has recorded his name? or what are the chief and most particular things, whereby we may judge, whether our religious worship be according to his appointment." To this I briefly answer under these four heads:

1. By endeavouring as far as possible to find out his mind and will, concerning his worship, both in the duties of natural and revealed religion. God has given us both the light of reason and the light of scripture to instruct us herein: Where reason fails us, the scripture directs, and where the scripture is silent, there we must betake ourselves to our own reason and conscience, to determine our practice in those things which are necessary to be determined; but without inventing new ceremonies out of our own fancy, and appointing rites and forms which God has never appointed; or persisting in those which he has already abolished. Let us see to it, that such truths be published amongst us, as are agreeable to the written word, and that due honour is paid to all the discoveries of his will, that he has made in every part of our religious solemnities. A little mistake in these things, where the heart is sincerely inquisitive after the mind and will of God, shall never make our worship unacceptable to his mercy.

2. His name is recorded only there, "where worship is paid him in and through Jesus Christ, the great Mediator. Some have supposed his human nature to be that greater and more perfect *tabernacle, not made with hands,*" of which St. Paul speaks; *Heb.* ix. 11. Whether that be so or no, this is certain; it is through his hands, who is our *great High-Priest over the house of God*, that our worship must be directed to the Father; for the name of God is in him, it is *the Man Jesus*, who is the *one Mediator between God and man;* 1 Tim. ii. 5. *in whom all the fulness of the godhead dwells bodily;* Col. ii. 9. And it is only, on such worship, as is offered through God's incarnate Son, that he has recorded his own name: It is only in and by the name of his Son that we can have access to the Father, *no man cometh to the Father but by him;* John xiv. 6. It is in his name he has

taught us to offer up all our prayers; *John* xvi. 24. If we *enter into the holiest*, that is, if our souls ascend to heaven in devotion, we must do it *by the blood of Jesus, as a new and living way, which he has consecrated for us;* Heb. x. 20. Whatsoever is done *in word or deed*, must be *to the glory of God through Jesus Christ;* so this great apostle Paul requires; *Col.* iii. 17.

3. If we would have the name of God recorded and stamped on our worship, it must be performed through the desired aids of his own Spirit. This is another qualification of true christian worship, such as God will accept; *Eph.* ii. 18. Both Jews and gentiles *have access by this one Spirit unto the Father, and both grow up together as a holy temple in the Lord. We are all builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit;* verse 21, 22.

4. If we would see the name of God yet further recorded upon his worship, "let us take care to awaken every christian virtue and grace into exercise, whensoever we are engaged in religious actions." Let us worship him in spirituality, and in sincerity of soul, God loves those only who adore him *in spirit and in truth:* Let us pay our honours to his Majesty, with great humility and self-abasement, at his foot, remembering we are, not only feeble creatures made out of the dust, but sinful creatures bowing before an almighty Being of perfect holiness: Let us pray to him with fervency of spirit, and awaken all the powers of our nature to attend upon his word, with devout reverence and submission. When he speaks to us in the ministry thereof, we should diligently guard against every wandering thought, and keep out every flying vanity from our hearts. Let our hope in his promises be stedfast and lively, and our dependance be on his grace. Let us take heed, that we have no false, or carnal, or hypocritical designs in our appearance before God, and our addresses to him; but let it be our zealous and affectionate desire to glorify our heavenly Father, to honour our great Mediator, and to seek the eternal happiness of ourselves and our fellow-creatures. Where these things are found, God has certainly recorded his name: There he dwells in such an assembly, and will encourage every sincere worshipper. But this brings me to the last proposition.

VII. "Wheresoever public worship is performed according to the will of God, in the instances before mentioned, we have everlasting encouragement to hope, that he will condescend to meet his people and *bless them.*" His ancient promise, which he sent by Moses to his chosen people in my text, continues its force through all generations. It is in Sion, that he assures us often in the Old Testament, that he will meet his people: *There he has commanded the blessing, even life for evermore;* Psalm cxxxiii. 3. Every gospel church, constituted according to the appointment of Christ, is a little sanctuary, a little Sion, and hath the blessings of Sion belonging to it. Many of the promises, which are literally made to Israel, and Jerusalem, and mount Sion, are applied to christians, under the New Testament, by the apostles themselves; and by their example, we are encouraged in the same manner to apply them.

Our blessed Saviour himself also has given us assurance; Matt. xviii. 20. *That where two or three* of his followers *are met together in his name*, and according to his institutions, there he himself is, and *will be in the midst of them.* The Father and the Son will come and dwell with his people in such assemblies, and diffuse divine blessings amongst them. Let us take heed that we have the name and the authority of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ, stamped upon all the parts of our worship, and we need not doubt his presence and blessing. But upon the mention of such a promise, our desire and zeal should

awake, and earnestly enquire, how glorious and how various those blessings are, which God has promised to his people, where he has recorded his name. Let us take a delightful survey of them, and by the exercise of faith and hope, appropriate them to ourselves, in every place, and in every season, where we attend on the pure worship of God.

1. Concerning Sion and all her assemblies for worship, it is promised, that *her priests shall be clothed with salvation;* Psalm cxxxii. 16. If they are such, as our exalted Saviour calls to be the ministers of his gospel, they shall be filled with his saving graces, they shall be furnished with the gifts of knowledge and utterance, answerable to their call and duty, they shall shine in these divine ornaments, they shall be like the high-priest of old, whose clothing was made *for glory and beauty*, while the sacred perfume was poured upon his head, which trickled *down to the skirts of his garments;* Exod. xxviii. 40. Psalm cxxxiii. 2, 3. The ministers of Zion shall spread the savour of the knowledge of Christ, and his all-sufficient power to redeem and save. *His name* from the lips of his ministers, shall be *as ointment poured forth:* They shall diffuse the sweet odours of the gospel of Christ, to refresh and revive the humble and weary souls, that attend on his holy ordinances, wherein they minister. They shall have their various gifts of elocution, exhortation and consolation, awakened into a pleasurable exercise, and shall obtain blessed success, amongst the souls and consciences of the worshippers. It shall be *like the dew on the mountains of Zion, where God has commanded the blessing* of everlasting life.

Now can we, who are ministers of the word, rest satisfied without feeling some of this divine benediction: when we exercise our constant ministry in holy things? Can we go on from week to week, still labouring in a formal round of services, and still contented without this heavenly favour? Are we not as it were clothed with salvation, by the messages of peace and love, which we are commissioned to convey to sinful men, in the name of Christ? And shall we be contented for many years together, without seeing any divine success attending them? Oh! may the ministrations and messages of grace, which shall be delivered from week to week in this place, in this new building, be attended with the divine influences of the Spirit of God, that your worthy and beloved pastor may triumph in diffusing the knowledge of Christ, and become *the savour of life unto life*, to a multitude of souls!

2. It is promised again unto Sion, *that it shall be said concerning her, this and that man was born there;* Psalm lxxxvii. 2, 3. There shall be many souls, who are *by nature dead in trespasses and sins*, called, as it were, out of their graves, they shall be raised from the dead, they shall be born unto God in the assemblies of his people, under the reign of the Messiah. It is evident this Psalm belongs to the christian state and dispensation, for it prophesies concerning Egypt and Babylon, Tyre and Philistia, that the heathen countries shall become converts, the gentiles shall be born a-new, shall be made the children of God in Sion.

It is by the word of God preached in the assemblies, that men are regenerated or born again; 1 *Cor.* iv. 15. 1 *Pet.* i. 23. every divine truth contributing toward this blessed work. *The whole counsel of God* for the salvation of men must be preached in every place: The knowledge of the law for the discovery of our sin, and danger, and distress, and the grace of the gospel for the relief of the distressed. It is this gospel of Christ that *is the power of God to salvation both to Jews and Gentiles;* Rom. i. 16. In Zion *the arm of the Lord shall be revealed*, and this divine report shall be believed; *Isaiah* liii. 1. The law of

God may and must be preached with its severity of terror and its strictness of demand, that sinners may be awakened and convinced of their guilt and weakness, of their helpless and hopeless state in themselves, that they may fly to the refuge that is set before them in the gospel. And where the law kills, the gospel can give life: Where the law works despair, the gospel provides hope. Faith and hope soften the soul to repentance, and work up the heart to a new, a holy, and an obedient temper, by the influence and motive of love. By this means, the loose, and the vile, and the sensual sinner is born into a new life of temperance; and the profane renounces his impiety, and grows in love with religion and godliness. Sion is the usual place, where these wonders of converting grace are wrought among men, by the presence of the quickening Spirit.

Is it not a sad and dismal thing to read what Solomon speaks; *Eccles.* viii. 10. Is it not a most lamentable and deplorable case, that multitudes of the wicked in our days, should come and go from the place of the holy, from the assemblies for divine worship, and abide still dead in sin, and are buried without repentance? Let us enquire of our consciences, is this the case of any soul of us here? Let us awaken our hearts this day to cry earnestly unto God, that we may never more come and depart from the places where God is worshipped, without being born unto God, without being regenerated by the word, without being made new creatures. Shall I take the freedom to address you, more particularly, who belong to this congregation, and who usually meet together for divine services? Fathers and masters, do you bring your families with you to the place of worship, and never concern yourselves whether this blessing of Sion attend your household? Whether your children or your servants be born again there? Or, whether they continue still in their state of nature, guilt and wretchedness? Tender mothers, are you contented to have your sons and daughters attend you to the solemn assembly, and still be the children of the first Adam, in all the ruins of his fall, the children of Satan and *the children of wrath?* And can your eyes look upon them with satisfaction and pleasure, and never drop a tear of pity on their circumstances, while they are not yet become the *sons and daughters of the living God?* Speak each of you to your own hearts in secret, and charge them never to be at rest in a thoughtless indolence, never to cease your addresses to the mercy-seat, till you can see some of the happy effects of this promise manifested to yourselves, and to all that are near and dear to you?

3. It is foretold concerning Sion and the church of God, that the *crown* of David *shall flourish* there, *that his horn shall be made to bud*, and *his enemies be clothed with shame;* Psalm cxxxii. 18. Jesus Christ, the true David, shall have his head crowned with glory and honour, in the assemblies of his people, where God has recorded his name. Here shall he receive the first homage of numerous subjects; *they shall be made a willing people in the day of his power;* Psalm cx. 3. Hither shall they come from the family of sin, and Satan, and death, and here shall they be made living subjects of Jesus their king. *His horn shall bud*, his power shall reveal itself, *he shall have a new seed to serve him*, growing up continually under the instructions of the sanctuary. *The Lord shall send the rod of his strength out of Zion*, and Jesus shall rule and reign in the midst of his enemies, and melt and soften the hearts of thousands of them into willing subjects. Satan, his grand enemy, shall be put to shame, by the loss of so many souls out of his dominions; All his arts of mischief to ruin mankind shall be confounded; the church of Jesus our king shall never be lost or die, *the gates of hell shall not prevail against it;* Matt. xvi. 18. I persuade myself this promise has been fulfilled and acknowledged in your former place

of worship: Jesus your king has been honoured in all his various offices, graces, and glories: His empire has been enlarged by the addition of many subjects: Your own souls are thankful witnesses of this grace, and we cannot but hope and pray, that this new-erected building, and those that attend on God here, shall be witnesses of the same honours done to the blessed Saviour, and a larger increase of his kingdom.

4. Another promise made to Sion, is, "that the poor and the hungry shall be satisfied with bread there, even with living bread, and the water of life, for God will *abundantly bless the provision* of his gospel-sanctuary;" *Psalm* cxxxii. 15. It is the poor alone, and the needy, and the humble in spirit that shall be fed with rich grace and abundant plenty; but those who are full of themselves, and are rich in their high opinion of their own circumstances, they *shall be sent empty away*. God will here provide supplies for the wants of every inhabitant in Sion. *The inhabitant shall not say* any longer *I am sick*, they shall be healed of their spiritual diseases by the sanctifying Spirit, they shall be made to lift up their heads, and rejoice by the Spirit the Comforter, *for their iniquities shall be forgiven them* through the blood of the Son of God; *Isaiah* xxxiii. 20, 24. All the particular necessities of hungry souls shall be here supplied: Those who come seeking and longing for some divine relief under their difficulties, shall often find a word suited to their case, they shall be supplied out of the stores of the sanctuary. Those who are bewildered in the dark, and are doubtful in their way, shall find a hint of happy advice; a beam of divine light, shining in their hearts, shall point them to the path, to which they should walk. Those who are mourning under a sense of guilt, or under the pressure of some heavy burden, shall be relieved and comforted out of the divine promises, and find the burden of their hearts made easy. Those who are bowed down, shall be supported and raised with a word of heavenly consolation; those who complain of hardness of heart, shall meet with a word of love and power, that shall melt their souls into tenderness and penitence, and mould them to the will of God their Saviour. Those who are surrounded with many and mighty adversaries, shall experience new strength conveyed to their hearts to wage the holy war with vigour, that they may come off conquerors; and those who are dying under a sense of sin, shall find divine life and salvation here. God will meet his own people, and supply them with every needful blessing of the covenant of grace.

5. In Sion, the worshippers shall be *made joyful in the house of prayer;* and the saints *shall shout aloud for joy,* Isaiah lvi. 6, 7. *Psalm* cxxxii. 16. They shall offer up their praises with holy cheerfulness, and delight themselves in the blessings of the sanctuary. Surely when *the priests are clothed with salvation,* when the crown of David flourishes, and his kingdom is enlarged, when poor perishing creatures are born into a new life, by the powers and provisions of grace, then the saints cannot but sing and rejoice. "When *the sons of the stranger shall join themselves to the Lord,* he will bring them to Sion, and make them joyful there, according to his promise." *Isaiah* lvi. 6, 7. He will exalt their joy into shouting, he will raise their delight to a high degree, in his holy ordinances, where his name is recorded. May I enquire of you, christians, have you never found this prophecy fulfilled in your former attendance on the ordinances of divine worship? Have you never experienced, that this promise has been made good to you, and this divine joy conferred upon you? Take it as a pledge and earnest of the full satisfactions and delights of the house of God on high, and in such proportion as it makes you holy and humble.

Happy will it be for your minister, if he can say from sweet experience, that he has been clothed with divine salvation, when he ministers in this place, that he has been

taught to spread the savour of the knowledge of Christ, through a numerous assembly, in this building. Happy for the people, when many of them shall be enabled to say, I was once blind and dead, but I was here awakened into divine light and life. I was new-born in Sion, and through the grace of God I am taken out of the family of Satan, and am become a son or a daughter of the Most High. I was overwhelmed with fears about my soul, and with the terrors of God which hung about me, but here I found the way of salvation, by Christ Jesus, made known unto me; thus all my terrors were scattered, and divine peace was spoken to my conscience. I was pained at my heart, under a sense of my guilt, and from such a text of scripture, or from such a sermon, I found divine rest and relief. My inward corruptions were strong, my irregular passions were wont to get the victory over me, but here I met with a word of power and grace to subdue them. I was entangled with a strong temptation, and here the snare was broken. I was oppressed with heavy sorrows, and I found support and comfort from the word of God, which was dispensed in this place: And, may this be the happy case, may this be the salvation and the joy of multitudes, that shall attend the future seasons of worship here!

The Use.—It is now time to conclude my discourse, and I shall do it by setting before you these four plain and natural lessons, which may be derived from it.

1. We may learn by this discourse, our obligations to give thanks to the Lord, for the general and special instances of his grace and goodness to us, in the things whereof I have been speaking. Come then and *bless the Lord, all our souls, and let all that is within us bless his holy name.* That he has built houses and habitations for himself, in this sinful miserable world; that he has not banished us for ever from his sight, and retired far away and withdrawn himself for ever, from such a defiled and wretched place, as this earth is made by the iniquity of its inhabitants. Bless the Lord, that he has recorded his name upon any thing that we can do, or we can enjoy, and that he has permitted sinners to make any approaches to him in all the ages of mankind, since the guilt and fall of our first parent; that he has given so many rich and precious promises for our encouragement to attend his habitation, and that he has ordained institutions of solemn worship for us to maintain any communion with himself. Bless him, that he has sent his gospel to Great-Britain, to enlighten us from heaven, while other nations lie in gross darkness and death; that he has taught us his name and his grace, and the forms of his worship; that he has called the inhabitants of our islands to assemble together in churches; that he has raised these dwelling places for himself in the midst of us, for every church of Christ, even in the heathen nations, is a little Sion, a sanctuary where God dwells. We cannot say, God has his name at all recorded in the large nations of heathenism and idolatry, where the true God is not worshipped, nor his Son Jesus known; Jesus, in whom his name dwells for ever. We can hardly say, his name is recorded in popish countries, though there is abundance of blasphemous and superstitious use of it there; but idolatry and anti-christian worship are powerful and prevalent over every thing that is evangelical and divine. It is the name of Babylon and antichrist that are recorded there, rather than the names of God and his Son. Blessed be God, from our very souls, that our lot is not cast in such a land, where gods of wood and stone are worshipped, where the name of the true God is not recorded, and where we can have no special promises, no reasonable expectation and hope, that he should meet and bless us.

Let us again give thanks to our God, who has so formed our civil constitution and government, at this day, that we have liberty to worship God, through Jesus Christ the

Mediator, in his own appointed ways; that we are not persecuted from corner to corner, but in every place, we are permitted to erect synagogues for divine service, and to attend on our God in those ordinances, on which he has stamped his own name. How many scattered christians are there up and down in the popish nations, where they are forbid to meet in any place for the solemnizing of true christian worship? How many nations are there where the places of protestant worship are utterly demolished, and christians are not suffered to unite their prayers and praises to the God whom they adore, in spirit and in truth? Let us yet again give thanks unto God, that, in the course of his providence, we have convenient places to assemble for his pure religion; that we are provided with so many advantages, that we are not exposed to the inconveniences of wind, or rain, or sultry seasons, and are secured from the disturbances of a sinful world. Let us bless God, that he has so plentifully stored the provinces of this land, with such buildings, that we are not exposed to the labour and hardships of long travel, which was a burdensome ceremony imposed on the Jews, who were required to wait upon their God *three times a year*, where he recorded his name, at Shiloh, or at Jerusalem; but we may meet him nearer at hand, and receive his public blessings, in so many of the streets of this great city, and in so many of the towns and villages of the British Isles.

And you, my friends of this congregation, have abundant occasion and reason for thankfulness, that God by his providence has fixed your assembly in so convenient a place, wherein you begin this day to pay him your worship. May you long enjoy it in undisturbed peace! O blessed be his name, that many of you have found God with you in former places of assembling, and that you are daily training up under his divine instructions and blessings, for the worship and happiness of the heavenly state, and for his more joyful and immediate presence.

2. There is a lesson of self-enquiry to be derived from this discourse. Do we, on good ground, believe, that the name of God is recorded on the worship which we offer to him? Otherwise we cannot possibly claim or reasonably expect the accomplishment of this divine promise. Let us examine our consciences on this head according to the evidences before given of such worship, whereon God has stamped his authority and his name. Do we heartily and sincerely seek, to learn the mind and will of God in his own word, concerning the religion that we should choose, and the worship which we perform? Do we engage in such services, as we find directed and appointed by him? Are the sermons on which we attend, the prayers and the songs which we offer up to God, and all the ministrations of his holy ordinances amongst us, such as are formed and guided by the rules of holy scripture, so far as scripture has given us any prescriptions about them? Do we take care to perform all that God has enjoined as far as possible, and do we take as much care to let nothing creep into our worship, but what the word of God or the necessary reason of things dictates to us? Do we make no additions of our own to the religious practices which God has enjoined, or the ceremonies which he has instituted? And can we appeal to God, so far as we know our own hearts, and can understand his word, that we practise nothing herein but according to his mind and will? Again,

Do we offer up all our religious services to the Father, in the name and by the mediation of his Son? Do we seek to draw near to the Father, only in that *new and living way*, which he has ordained? Do we seek for acceptance at the throne, through the atoning sacrifice of our *great High-Priest*, and through his intercession, as our advocate at the right hand of God? Can we appeal concerning our own conduct herein even

to our Lord Jesus Christ himself, *Lord, thou*, who *knowest all things, knowest that we love thee*, and that we would never draw near to the mercy-seat without thee.

Do we pray for the assistance of the Holy Spirit of God in all our acts of devotion and attendance on his word? Do we seek to have our minds enlightened, to have our thoughts directed, and our wills made obedient by this blessed Spirit? Do we seek earnestly, for the influences of this Spirit, to raise our hearts towards heaven, and to animate and warm all our affectionate powers, in religious worship? Do we depend on him for divine aids, so that we may get nearer to God by every part of the religious services we perform? Where the Spirit of God is utterly neglected, I fear it will be hard to prove that the name of God is recorded in that worship.

Do we endeavour to exercise every christian grace, suited to those parts of worship in which we are engaged? Do we appear before God with all holy reverence of his majesty? Do we enter into his courts, even the assemblies of his people, with a religious temper of mind, desirous to see God in his sanctuary? Do we address him in prayer, with holy fervency for what we want, and yet with humble resignation to his wisdom and will? Do we keep our spirits intent and watchful in the season of prayer, or do we let our thoughts wander as they please, to the ends of the earth? Do we offer up our souls in sincere praises, and rejoice before the Lord in our holy songs? Do we attend on the ministrations of his word, with trembling and fear, with hope and desire to profit? Do we long to learn something further concerning the will of our God and Father, concerning the characters and offices of our blessed Jesus, and all the glorious grace which the gospel contains? Do we receive the precepts of God concerning our duty to God and to our neighbours, with all holy submission and obedience, and are none of his commands grievous to us? Do we relish the joys of his sanctuary, in this lower world, with a delightful expectation and hope of paying better worship to him, in a superior state? Are our souls daily growing up towards a more perfect conformity to the blessedness, and the business of the heavenly world, so far as we are permitted to know it here on earth? If we find these characters upon ourselves, and on the worship which we perform, we may then reasonably hope, that God has recorded his name amongst us, and will come and meet us and bless us.

3. Another lesson we may learn here, is a direction what we should pray for, especially on this day, together with a strong encouragement for prayer, and expectation of the presence of God with us, and his blessing upon us. He has connected our duty with his promises, and we should encourage our faith, and learn to expect the promise fulfilled, when, upon the sincerest searches of our own hearts, we find them engaged in a proper manner, in his service and our duty. We are met together this day, to pray that God would be pleased to accomplish his gracious word of promise, both to the minister and to the people, who hope to pay their worship to the great God, if he permit, for many following years in this place. Let our prayers then be directed by the divine words of promise. We would pray for all the blessings of Sion on you, who shall worship God here. That your minister may be clothed with salvation, that he may diffuse the savour of the name of Christ in this place, with great success; that his gifts and graces may be multiplied and increased for your edification, and that his health may be restored and maintained to your great advantage and joy.

We would pray, that souls may be born again, in multitudes, in this place: That some may be taken, as it were, from Egypt, and from Babylon, from the vile and wicked gene-

rations of men, from the persecutors and the profligate of this world, and may be born into a new and divine life by the word of grace, as it is here ministered: That the lewd and the drunken, the profane and the vicious, if any such attend in this place, may be convinced of their sins here, may here be released from the bonds of their iniquities, and return no more to madness and folly: That the cruel and malicious may here be taught to put on meekness, and gentleness, and love, and the wrathful and passionate learn to govern their spirits: That the covetous wretch may have his hands released from the greedy gripe of gold and silver, and his heart learn here to despise earthly possessions, in comparison of the riches of grace; and may seek after an inheritance more glorious, and more durable than lands or houses on earth. In short, we should pray that every part of the gospel of Christ may have its due place in the ministrations which shall be performed here, that grace and duty may go hand in hand; and that many who are *children of wrath, and dead in trespasses and sins*, may here be *created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works*, and made the children of Sion, the sons and daughters of God.

We would pray that the crown of David may here flourish on his head, that Jesus the king of Sion may see a large increase of his kingdom, and many souls subjecting themselves to the sceptre of his righteousness, and his mercy, and receive him in every sacred office he sustains for the salvation of sinful men? We would pray that *the poor may be satisfied here with bread;* that every hungry soul may find something here suited to his sacred appetite and pious desires, may find some word in the ministry, to relieve and support him, under every want, to advise and direct him, under every darkness and difficulty, and to strengthen him under every weakness of mind, that those who are *poor in spirit*, and empty and despairing in themselves, may be filled with all heavenly blessings with pardon and peace, with righteousness and grace, and holy consolation through Jesus Christ. Let us put up our united prayers, that in this congregation, the "saints of God may *shout aloud for joy;* that God may *inhabit the praises* of his people here, and that you may all *be made joyful in this house of prayer;* that ye may sing the songs of the Lamb in this assembly, as well as the songs of Moses and David, and find divine pleasure here, raising your souls towards those *rivers of pleasure*, which flow at the right-hand of God. In fine, that you may have much of the presence of God with you, whensoever you shall meet together here, in the constant or occasional seasons of divine worship, and that he may sensibly fulfil all his words of promise.

4. The last lesson I would recommend to your learning here, is, "a holy elevation and joy of soul in the faith and prospect of the heavenly worship, and the more complete accomplishment of all the best promises of God, in the heavenly Jerusalem, which is for ever holy, in the Zion which is above." There surely he has recorded his name in all its most glorious characters, for his noblest and brightest residence is there, among *the innumerable company of angels and the church of the first-born* on high. There he has stamped the name of his holiness and his majesty, the name of his justice and mercy, the name of his all-sufficiency and his faithfulness in eternal signatures, which shall never be blotted out. There he will meet his people, and bless them with everlasting blessings, such *as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive them.* He will surely make them *exceeding joyful, with the light of his countenance*, in his house of praise, when earthly scenes shall vanish from the sight, and all that is low and mortal shall be forgotten.

There, we trust, you and your pastor shall appear, and you shall be his glory and his *crown of rejoicing in that day*, as he also shall be yours. Your appearance there will be an undoubted and eternal evidence, that he has not prayed or preached in vain, and that you have not heard the gospel from his lips in vain. There shall your mutual satisfactions rise high in your united songs; for it is there God has appointed the place of his everlasting worship, and the united devotions and joys of all his saints. With happy and unceasing harmony shall *the song of Moses and of the Lamb* be sung for all our deliverances and for all our salvations, while we travelled through the wilderness of this world, till he had brought us to the holy land of promise, and to eat the fruits of paradise. There shall we join with that unmeasurable assembly of angels, and with all the glorified saints that have gone before us, in one divine hymn of praise, *Salvation, honour and glory, to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever.* Amen.

APPENDIX

TO THE

THIRD DISCOURSE.

THE BLESSING OF A CORNER-STONE, IN THE BUILDING OF A POPISH CHURCH, TAKEN OUT OF THE RITUALE ROMANUM.

THE day before the first stone is blessed, let the priest fix a wooden cross on that spot of the ground where the altar is to stand; the next day this stone, which must be exactly square and well cornered, shall be blessed in this manner: The priest having put on his proper attire, his albe or surplice, his surcingle and other ecclesiastical robes, having some more priests and clerks with him, must bless the salt and the water, unless he has holy water ready before; and while the following Psalm is sung by the clerks, he must sprinkle the place where the cross is with holy water, saying, "Lord Jesus Christ, put the sign of salvation in this place, and permit not the blasting angel to enter." Then the lxxxiv. Psalm is sung alternately with responses. When the Psalm is ended, the priest turning to the place that was sprinkled, says, "Let us pray." "O Lord God, who although thou art not contained in the heavens and the earth, yet condescendest to have a house here, where thy name is daily invoked: Visit this place, we pray, with the light of thy countenance, by the intercession and merits of the blessed virgin, and of all the saints, and particularly saint M. or N. to whose honour this church is built, and purify it from all defilement, by the infusion of thy grace, and preserve it purified, &c.—that all spiritual wickednesses may fly from hence, by our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with thee for ever." *Amen.*

Then he blesses the stone with the responses of the clerk or clerks thus: Priest. "Our help is in the name of the Lord." Resp. "Who made heaven and earth." Pr. "Let the name of the Lord be blessed." R. "Henceforth and for evermore." Pr. "The stone which the builders rejected." R. "The same is become the head of the corner." Pr. "Thou art Peter." R. "And upon this rock will I build my church." Pr. "Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost." R. "As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be." Amen. "Let us pray." "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God,—who art the corner-stone cut out of the mountain without hands, and the unchangeable foundation, confirm this stone which is now to be placed in thy name, &c." Amen. Then the priest sprinkles the stone with holy water, and taking a knife, engraves, or scrapes, the sign of the cross on every side of it, saying, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," making the sign of the cross at each of the three names. Amen. "Let us pray." "Bless, O Lord, this creature of stone, making the sign of the cross, and grant by the invocation of thy holy name, that whosoever have assisted with a pure heart in building this church, may have health of body and the cure of their souls by Christ our Lord." Amen. Afterwards let the ordinary litanies be said:

Then the mortar being ready, and the mason standing by, the priest begins thus, the clerks following him. " Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it, and vowed a vow. Surely this place is holy and I knew it not."

Then let the cxxvii. Psalm be read. " Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it, &c. Glory be to the Father, as it was in the beginning, &c." Which being said, the priest standing, touches, or lays his hand on the stone all the while the mason is placing it with the mortar, and says, " in the faith of Jesus Christ we place this chief stone in the foundation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, that true faith may flourish here, and the fear of God, and the love of the brethren, &c." Speaking this, he makes a cross at each name in the Trinity. Then the priest sprinkles holy water upon the stone, saying, " Thou shalt sprinkle me, O Lord, with hyssop, and I shall be clean. Thou shalt wash me and I shall be whiter than snow." Then the li. Psalm is read. Then again, " Glory be to the Father, &c." And if the foundations are laid open, he sprinkles holy water upon them all; but if they are not opened, he walks round the place designed for the foundation of the church, and begins to sprinkle, saying these words, and the clerks following, " O how dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God: This is the gate of heaven."

Then the lxxxvii. Psalm is read, " His foundation is in the holy mountains, &c." while he is sprinkling all the foundation, and the others repeating as a response, " O how dreadful is this place, &c." After all this, he adds at last. " Let us pray." " Almighty and merciful God, who hast given to thy priests such grace above other men, that whatsoever is perfectly and worthily done by them in thy name, shall be believed to be done by thee: We pray thine infinite mercy, that thou wouldst visit what we visit, that thou wouldst bless what we bless,—and at our entrance here, as mean as we are, let devils fly, and the angel of peace enter, by the merits of thy saints, through Christ our Lord." Amen. And with another short prayer the ceremony is ended. After all this is done, and many other ceremonies which the priest performs towards blessing the church, and the walls of it when they are built, it is purified sufficiently to admit mass to be said in it: Yet still the consecration of the church is reserved for the bishop himself, at a proper season.

DISCOURSE IV.

THE JEWISH WORSHIP, AND THE CHRISTIAN COMPARED; OR, REASONS WHY THE WORSHIP AND ORDER OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES, ARE NOT SO PARTICULARLY PRESCRIBED, AS THOSE WHICH MOSES GAVE TO THE CHURCH OF ISRAEL.

IF social religion and worship, or the communion of saints, as our creed expresses it, together with the duties that depend thereon, are so necessary to maintain christianity in the world, what reason can be given why our blessed Lord did not, in a more express and direct manner, institute the formation of christian churches, with all the parts of public worship and order, in the New Testament? If church-worship be of such importance, why have we not all the affairs, that relate to the officers of a church, and their ministry, preaching, praying, and celebrating divine ordinances, more particularly described and appointed by an express command? Was not God pleased to give express rules and orders to the Jews, concerning their worship at the tabernacle and temple, their priests and sacrifices, and other solemnities? Why should the blessed God so exactly mark out and prescribe every lesser ceremony, in the jewish church, which was but a shadowy dispensation, and yet hath not descended to so very particular a description of every form and circumstance, that relates to his churches, under the nobler dispensation of the gospel? Why should that fabric of *carnal ordinances* have a more exact model, than this spiritual building, which so far excels in glory?

It is granted indeed, that there might some difficulties and doubts arise in the jewish worship, about some of the natural circumstances that relate to the performance of it: As whether the child must be circumcised with a *sharp stone* as Zipporah did, or a knife as Joshua? And, who must perform that office? Whether the father or mother, the ruler or the priest? Whether in sacrifices the jugular vein of the creature must be cut, or whether it must be stabbed to the heart? Whether in their washings and purifications, for any accidental impurity, they must put their whole bodies under water, with every part of all their garments, or whether sprinkling or other methods of washing in some cases were not sufficient?

These things, and many others, as the Jews pretend, are to be determined by their oral law and tradition, wherein the church of Rome has imitated them exactly, and gives us her traditions to clear up the darkness, and supply the defects of scripture. And though we justly maintain the sufficiency of scripture, without their traditions, to teach us all that is necessary to please God, always supposing the common use and exercise of our reasoning powers, yet still it must be confessed, that many of the same sort of things, under the gospel, are but obscurely prescribed, in comparison of the plain and express prescriptions of the jewish law; and much is left to be gathered by our own reasonings, from the light of nature, and the occasional hints which are given in the history of the New Testament.

Let the instance be the order of priesthood, and the persons appointed to minister in divine service. Whosoever was of the seed of Levi, was born to sacred work; the eldest son of the house of Aaron, was the high-priest, and the inferior priesthood was all composed of his brethren and kindred. The method of their consecration was by offering

such particular sacrifices, putting the blood on their thumbs, ears, and toes; besides some special washings, sprinklings, and vestments; as *Exodus* xxix. The maimed or deformed in body were to be secluded from this office; their maintenance was determined to arise from tithes, and some appointed portions of the sacrifices. But under the gospel, the different degrees of church-officers, bishops, pastors, and teachers, seem not to be distinguished with quite so much evidence; their characters are much more inward and spiritual, and therefore not so easy to be discerned; the method of their appointment and ordination is the subject of perpetual controversy? and their support arises from the voluntary contributions of the people, of which the New Testament has not assigned the proportion.

What is now mentioned concerning ecclesiastical offices, holds true in other parts of christian administrations; and we are forced to collect rules for the performance of many of them, by a comparison of several scriptures together, by matters of fact, circumstances, examples, and precedents, and by long trains of consequential deductions, because we find not the rules prescribed in any express words of command.

Let the business of baptism of infants be another instance. How clearly is the appointment of the circumcision of the infant males, on the eighth day, expressed, in comparison of the baptism of christian children? Take the observation of any sabbath, and particularly of the Lord's-day, to be another example of this obscurity, of the time of christian-worship, in comparison with the exact rules of jewish sabbatisms. We have none of these things prescribed in any express words of command. Some persons have taken laudable pains to shew how many of these things are revealed, in the Gospels, Acts, and Epistles, by way of hint and intimation, and may be found by deductions and inferences from some of the occasional incidents in the sacred history; but though some of these, I think, are just and strong, yet others of these inferences are but feeble and dubious, and some have been found to be mistakes; so that it must be granted after all, that, under the jewish economy, several things were required, in more express language of direction and command, than under the New Testament. This difficult enquiry has sometimes exercised and puzzled my thoughts, and the most considerable reasons which I have ever been able to suggest and assign for this difference, are such as these, *viz.*

First, The state of the Jews was the infancy of the church of God, and children had need of every letter and syllable to be marked down for them with the plainest pen, that they might spell over their lessons, learn their duties, perform their bodily exercises, and fulfil their tasks. And therefore also their rites and ceremonies were so very numerous, to keep them always employed; their infancy being less suited to the more spiritual parts of religion without such carnal aids. St. Paul, in the epistle to the Galatians, seems to express this in plain words; chapter iv. 3. *We, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world*, so he calls the train of jewish ceremonies. But our Lord Jesus, the great reformer of his church, finished that infant dispensation by his death, and raised his people to a more mature age, by his own resurrection, and the gospel; and sent down his Spirit, and sent abroad his apostles, to teach the world a more manly, spiritual, and refined worship, and such as is more suited to the nature of God, and his intellectual creation.

Now the more inward and seraphic all the devotion is, the less doth it need preciseness of form, either to assist or adorn it; therefore the modes of worship in the heavenly state shall probably be the mere dictates of glorified nature, and perhaps shall be incumbered

with no prescribed ceremonies at all; and for the same reason, the rites and ceremonies, that Christ ordained in the evangelical state, were few and easy; and if the exact forms of them be not so very evident in the New Testament, as the forms of the yokes of bondage were in the Old, it is to teach us, that the nature of christian worship is less ceremonious, is more spiritual and free, and approaches nearer to the heavenly state, than that of the Jews; and it informs us also, that we, under the gospel, are esteemed as outgrowing the state of infancy, and it is supposed that manly prudence should direct us, especially in all those common natural circumstances of worship, which were more exactly prescribed to children.

Secondly, As the church or nation of the Jews was a type or figure of the whole invisible church of God, so the ceremonies of their religion were typical and figurative of gospel times, and spiritual things under the great Messiah; and even many of the common and natural circumstances of action prescribed in that religion, *viz.* times, places, &c. were also designed to be types of evangelical affairs and heavenly things; therefore it was necessary that God himself, who only knew all his own future schemes, should prescribe and determine them, that they might exactly correspond with the great antitypes, which were to be revealed hereafter. God only can appoint types and emblems of his own future blessings: He did not think fit to leave these things to the reason of men, who could not foreknow the glories of the gospel. But the religion of the gospel is not such a typical religion, and therefore there is not such a necessity that circumstantials should be so strictly prescribed. The instances that prove this are abundant. The high-priest or chief officer in the jewish church, was particularly described and appointed, with all his characters, and all his garments, and his forms of officiating in sacred things, because he was an appointed type of Jesus the Son of God, *our great High-Priest*, in his various characters and offices, which offices and characters only the great God foreknew and could describe, because he foreordained them all.

The places where the ark, the tabernacle, or the temple stood, were the only appointed places, where common sacrifices were to be offered, and where God would accept them: Now the tabernacle and temple were types of the human nature of our Lord Jesus Christ, in which God dwells. Christ calls his body *a temple;* John ii. 19. All our *spiritual sacrifices* of prayer and praise must be brought to Christ, otherwise they will not be accepted of God. *The veil*, through which we draw near to God, is his flesh; *Heb.* x. 20.

The jewish sabbaths and festivals of several kinds were appointed times of rest from labour, and of paying worship to God; but these were types of the rest from sin and guilt, and a spirit of bondage, that believers should enjoy under the gospel by the mediation of Jesus Christ; *Heb.* iv. 3, 4, 9, 10. *Col.* ii. 17. as well as of the eternal rest that the saints shall enjoy in heaven. Every morning and every evening were appointed times for killing and offering of the daily sacrifice; but these were types of the perpetual efficacy and virtue of the one sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, powerful to atone for our daily transgressions, as if he was daily offered up afresh. See *Heb.* vii. 24, 27. and x. 14. So the morning and evening incense, in the holy place, was a type of his continual intercession in heaven, which may be collected from various parts of scripture compared together. The holy of holies was the place appointed for the high-priest, *once a year, to enter into with the blood* of the sacrifice; but this was a type of heaven, into which our Lord Jesus Christ, our great High-Priest, *is entered with his own blood, to appear before God for us;* Heb. ix. 24. I might instance in many other parts of the

jewish worship. It is no wonder then that places and times, and particular circumstantials of worship and order, in the church of the New Testament, are not so particularly prescribed, as under the Old Testament, because they were types and shadows which could be appointed only by God, who knew the antitypes; and these shadows are now fled away, and we have the substances themselves set in view by the gospel of Christ.

Thirdly, Another reason why the jewish dispensation was confined to such nice rules of exactness and uniformity, might be, because it was ordained for the men of one nation only, who sprung all from a single family, whose manners, tempers, and customs were near akin to each other, and who were all under the same government, and their governors bound to the same forms of worship with themselves. And indeed the whole form of their government was inwrought with their religion, and their political laws were designed to correspond with all the rites and ceremonies of their worship, and to support them. Besides, as they lived in a country of no large extent, and their males as representatives of their whole church and nation, were required to meet three times a year at Jerusalem; they were more easily reduced and confined to precise and uniform modes and rituals of worship. But the religion of Christ was brought into the world quite in another manner; not to one nation only, but to be propagated among all nations, and to be practised by men of most various and distant climates; men of contrary customs, manners, and laws; men that lived under governors of different religions, and such as hated the name of Christ. These could not so easily be reduced to a precise uniformity in any public worship, nor be maintained and kept in it; therefore though our Lord, by his apostles, has drawn the great outlines and boundaries of worship, and the master-strokes of discipline, partly in precepts, and partly in examples, yet many lesser incidences and appendices, which were necessary to be determined, in order to the actual support and practice of social worship, he left to be agreed upon by churches or christian societies, as was suited best to attain the great end of edification in knowledge, holiness, and peace.

Fourthly, When we survey the religion of the Jews, we must distinguish between the worship of the synagogue, and that of the tabernacle, or temple. Their church was their whole nation, for it was ordained of God to be a national church, and the tabernacle or temple was the place of national worship: And that there might be an appearance of the whole church worshipping together, all the males of Israel *three times a year* were required to come up to the tabernacle or temple, I might add, or the ark of God in Zion, and pay their sacrifices to the Lord there. And the modes and formalities of this worship were prescribed with great exactness, as being typical of the universal invisible church, and the spiritual worship to be performed by it, and the spiritual blessings that belong to it, as was hinted before; but the worship of the synagogue, was the natural social worship of prayer and praise, which was agreed to be paid to God weekly, by so many persons as lived in a convenient neighbourhood. The forms hereof were not instituted by God himself, but left much to the discretion and agreement of elder and wiser men among themselves.

Now the worship in christian churches, which were to be raised in every nation, is much more akin to the practice of the synagogues, where one congregation met together, who *with one mouth* could *glorify God*, than it is to the practice of the temple-worship, which was chiefly ordained for the jewish national church. In the synagogues there was preaching, praying, and reading the scriptures every sabbath. Now here it was not determined in holy scripture, how often they should pray or sing psalms, whether before

or after preaching or reading, or both; nor which persons of the levites should perform those offices; and some of the descendants of other tribes might be, and were employed in this ministry: Some of the prophets who preached to the people of old were of other tribes; Paul, of the tribe of Benjamin, was desired to give an exhortation, as well as Jesus our Lord, of the tribe of Judah, read and preached in the synagogue; *Acts* xiii. 15. *Luke* iv. 16.

In short, the worship and order of the synagogues, as to the modes and circumstances of it, were such as the common prudence of men, or the light of nature directed, together with so much of the doctrines and duties of the revealed religion of Moses and the patriarchs, as might be practised on any time, or at any place, or by any persons qualified for it, and appointed by men to that service. And so is the worship and order of the christian church: It is such as the light of nature dictates, mingled with, and regulated by the doctrines and duties of christianity, so far as Christ and his apostles have taught and prescribed them. And these are to be practised in all nations, the light of nature, reason, and common prudence, of the fellow-worshippers, agreeing upon such circumstances of human actions, as are necessary to be determined, and such as the New Testament has left undetermined and uncertain.

It is no wonder then that the circumstantials of these parts of order and worship are not confined to precise rules and uniformity, in the christian church, any more than they were in the jewish synagogue. The common reason and prudence of mankind points out the chief and most necessary parts, both of the one and the other, always supposing the difference between the jewish and the christian revelations of doctrine and duty, which being mingled with the worship and order, did something toward the regulation of the form thereof.

Fifthly, The last reason I offer why many things, in the christian worship, are not so particularly prescribed, nor so evident as in the jewish, may be, because in the christian religion, the *new command*, as St. John calls it, or the duties of love and charity are more abundantly required and enforced, beyond what they were under the law of Moses, and that notwithstanding we may differ in particular opinions: And christianity being to be diffused through all nations, among persons of a thousand different notions and prejudices, it was very probable there would be more varieties of opinion, in sacred things, than would be found in one nation only: And in many parts of christian practice there is more room left by this obscurity, for the trial of our mutual love, and more occasion given for the exercise of charity among those, that are true disciples of Christ, than if all were confined to uniformity of practice, by express precept. And where the scripture has left any obscurity upon doctrines or practices, I would be very unwilling to quarrel with my fellow-christians, for taking up a principle or practice different from mine. The xiv. chapter to the Romans leaves several points of practice undetermined for this very purpose. Let every one of us search as far as we can, by diligence and prayer, to find our duties in the word of God: *Whereto we have attained, let us walk by the same rule*, and continue still to love *all those who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity*, though they differ from us in meats and days, and other matters *of doubtful disputation*. Amen.

DISCOURSE V.

THE HOLINESS OF THE JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN CHURCHES CONSIDERED AND COMPARED.

THE jewish nation was once the only visible church of God among men, and the gentiles were excluded; but for near seventeen hundred years past, the visible church of God has been made up of the several christian churches, scattered through the world, from whence unbelievers only are excluded. In what relation each of them stand to the invisible church, will appear in the following propositions; and thereby we may learn the different sort of holiness, that belonged to them:

I. Since the apostasy of our first parents from God, mankind comes into the world under much more unhappy circumstances, than they would have done in a state of perfect innocency. There are many such vicious propensities, disorders, and corruptions in human nature, as tend to lead men astray from God, and from their own duty and happiness. In this state of depravation, before they are renewed by divine grace, they follow the sinful appetites and passions that work in them, they *fulfil the desires of the flesh and of the mind,* they live in darkness, ignorant of God, or at least thoughtless and regardless of him, as creatures *without God in the world,* creatures that appear to have none of the moral characters of his children, nor bear his holy image, nor are entitled to his favour: They are led and governed, not only, by the course and *fashion of this world,* but, also, by the temptations of the devil, and they are led captive by the prince of darkness, that evil spirit whose dominion is spread through all the earth, who is, as it were, *the god of this world,* and who works powerfully, in all the sons and daughters of Adam, as they are in a state of degeneracy: They are *children of disobedience,* for they break the laws of their Maker wilfully, they neglect or renounce God, and set up idols in his stead; they are idolaters to their own lusts, their pleasures, their honours, or their possessions, and they are rather the children and imitators of Satan, than the children of God, or born of him, or like to him: They are by nature strangers to his covenant of mercy, have no interest in his salvation by his Son Jesus Christ, nor share in the spiritual and eternal blessings of the gospel; and as they dwell in this world without God, so without any solid hope of a better world. They are *dead in trespasses, in sins, and know not the way of life and peace.* This is the plain, obvious, and common state of all mankind, till they are changed and renewed, and become religious and holy. Scripture is full of such descriptions of mankind; but if we had no scripture to support this charge, our daily experience and observation gives a deplorable evidence to the truth of the greatest part of it.

It is granted indeed, that some, by reason of their particular complexion, have a few more natural virtues, and moral decencies, than others; and some by the advantage of education, and especially where divine revelation is known, are restrained thereby from those degrees of excess in some vices, which would otherwise prevail over them: But, in the main, it is certain, that we are born of sinful parents, and partake of the irregular

appetites and evil passions that are in them, and that *none can bring a clean thing out of an unclean;* Job xiv. 4. that we are *conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity;* Psalm li. 7. that *what is born of the flesh, is flesh,* or sinful nature, and prone to evil; John iii. 6. *that every imagination of the thought of the heart of man,* that is, by nature as now corrupted, *is only evil,* and that *continually,* and even from his childhood, or youth. The nature of man was pure and holy in its original, as it came from the hand of God; but as it now comes into the world, it hath the principles and seeds of all iniquity within it: And these, which I have described, are the general characters of all mankind in greater or less degrees till they are changed, converted, and born again, or born of the Holy Spirit; *John* iii. 6, 7. Instead of enlarging on the other proofs of this proposition, I shall refer only to *Rom.* iii. 9—19. where all mankind, as things now stand, both Jews and gentiles, without the recovering grace of God, are represented by the apostle in a state of sin and death; *all are sinners, there is none that doeth good, no not one: The way of peace have they not known, every mouth is stopped, and the whole world guilty before God.* *

II. From the beginning of the world throughout all ages, there have been some persons of this fallen race of man, who have been recovered by divine grace, converted to God, *translated out of darkness into light,* raised from a death in sin to a life of holiness, and are become *children of the light,* and heirs of life: Whose soul and spirit have been awakened to repentance and serious religion; whose hearts are circumcised to love God, who do really renounce and cut off, subdue and mortify *the lusts of the flesh and of the mind,* and resist the temptations of the evil one; who are *born of God,* are adopted by him, become his people, his children, and have his image renewed in them; who are his saints, his holy ones, and are partakers of his holiness; who abandon all idols, and walk with God in the world, maintaining a holy intercourse with him by prayer and praise, faith and obedience; who have the Spirit of God dwelling in them, and they are his temple, they are his chosen people, his peculiar inheritance, redeemed from the bondage of their own lusts, and the slavery of Satan the prince of darkness; and travel through this world, as through a wilderness, under the direction of God, towards the promised inheritance, the heavenly country: They have hope in his mercy and his promises, they are the objects of his love and mercy, they are sanctified and devoted to God, *a holy people, a chosen generation,* elected or chosen, and called by his grace, *a royal priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices to him,* with acceptance, and these are usually called, the invisible church of God.

III. As God has designed, in all ages, to draw out of this sinful race of man some holy souls to be objects of his mercy, so it hath pleased his wisdom to carry on his transactions with men, throughout all his dispensations towards them, in a way of type, emblem, and figure; frequently appointing carnal, temporal, and visible things, characters, persons, and families, to become emblems and figures of things and characters spiritual and invisible. This in several particulars is most evident from express scripture. The first man Adam was a type or figure of Christ the second Adam; 1 *Cor.* xv. 45—49. and *Rom.* v. 14. Aaron the high-priest, and David the king among the Jews,

* That this character and sentence is absolutely universal and without exception, see further proved at the end of this discourse, just before the recapitulation.

were types of Jesus Christ, the High-Priest and King of his people. This farther appears in many places; so the manna from heaven, and the water from the rock in the wilderness, were a figure of Christ feeding his people with his own flesh and blood; 1 *Cor.* x. 1—4. *John* vi. 49, 51, 53. The tabernacle, the sacrifices, the washings and purifications, and many of the ceremonies of the jewish worship, are figures or shadows of Jesus Christ, and his atonement for sin, and the sanctification of the Holy Ghost, and the spiritual blessings that belong to the gospel, *Col.* ii. 16, 17. 1 *Cor.* v. 7. *Heb.* ix. 8, 9, 13. and x. 1, &c. and Canaan is a type of the heavenly inheritance; *Heb.* iv. 1. and xi. 13, 16. Those who have written on the doctrine of types, have made these things appear beyond all just and reasonable exception.

Now, from the beginning of the world, God seems to have designed, there should be some outward and visible types and figures, of these two sorts of mankind, the good and the bad, the holy and the unholy, or the church and the world, and some plain distinction between them made in a visible manner. These different persons were at first called *the seed of the woman*, and *the seed of the serpent;* Gen. iii. 15. Then the family of Cain, who went from the presence of the Lord; *Gen.* iv. 14, 16. and were called the *sons and daughters of men*, Gen. vi. 1, 2. were a figure of the wicked, and were generally all wicked persons: And the family of Seth, who came in the room of righteous Abel; *Gen.* iv. 25. and who called upon the name of the Lord, or were called by the name of God, that is, *the sons of God;* Gen. iv. 26. and vi. 2. were a figure of righteous men, of the saints of God, and had most good men amongst them. Again, Shem the blessed son of Noah, with his family, was thus distinguished as a visible church, from Ham and his posterity, who were cursed. After that Abraham was called from the rest of the idolatrous world, as a figure and pattern, or father of all true believers, and children of God. So Isaac the son of promise, was distinguished from Ishmael the son of the flesh; *Gal.* iv. 23, 24, 29. So Jacob from Esau; *Rom.* ix. 13. And when God divided the world into Jews and gentiles eminently by Moses, the scripture gives us abundant ground to reckon those two different people, Jews and gentiles, a visible emblem of the division of all mankind into these two parts, the church and the world, or the righteous and the wicked, as will appear in what follows:

IV. The nation of Israel appears in the representations of scripture to be a figure or emblem of the righteous or religious part of mankind, of the saints of God, or his holy ones, his invisible church. The Israelites were the natural seed of Abraham *the friend of God*, the great believer, *the father of the faithful*, and the peculiar favourite of heaven. They derived many blessings through him; they had many privileges by their covenant at Sinai, and the promises of many divine favours; they had *the adoption* or sonship; God was their father, they were his first-born, and his favourites; they were his chosen people, an elect nation, and the beloved; they were redeemed by him, from the bondage of Pharaoh king of Egypt; he was their Redeemer, and *their Holy One in the midst of them;* they were the people of his salvation, conducted by him to the promised land through the wilderness: They are called his saints, or holy ones, having circumcision and other outward marks of holiness, or dedication to God; they had the true God for their God and their King, the Lord of their visible church, and head of their civil state, and he dwelt amongst them in a visible cloud of glory on the mercy-seat: They were *a peculiar people to himself, a holy nation, a royal priesthood.* See these characters; *Rom.* ix. 4, 5. *Exod.* xix. 5, 6. and iv. 22. and many other places.

Now these titles and characters, which belonged heretofore in an external, visible, and typical sense to the nation of Israel, do really and spiritually belong to the invisible church of God, his chosen, called, and faithful people, who were born of God, and who are the children of Abraham, and imitators of his faith, and heirs of the promise; *Rom.* iv. 11. *Gal.* iii. 29. Who are inwardly and spiritually holy, whose hearts are circumcised to love the Lord, and are interested in his everlasting love; and on this account a real saint is called *an Israelite indeed;* John i. 47. *a Jew inwardly;* Rom. ii. 29. True christians, in the New Testament, are called *the Israel of God;* Gal. vi. 16. as well as they are often represented, by the ancient prophets, under that name. These are *the true circumcision, inwardly in the heart and spirit;* Rom. ii. 29. These are *the circumcision, who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus;* Phil. iii. 3. *who are circumcised with the circumcision without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh;* Col. ii. 11.

And to confirm this doctrine, the scripture proceeds yet further, and represents even the best of blessings and the heavenly state, or the final reward of all the saints by the same sort of emblems, borrowed from the Jews. They go to *the bosom of Abraham;* Luke xvi. 22, 23. *They sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven;* Matt. viii. 11. *The blessing of Abraham comes on the gentiles,* that is, that God is their God, and *their exceeding great reward;* Gal. iii. 14. They are heirs of the heavenly inheritance, according to the ancient promise made to Abraham; *verse* 29. They enter into that promised rest, *that remains for the people of God,* typified by Canaan, the rest promised to the Jews; *Heb.* iii. and iv.* Here let it be noted, that there were multitudes, in this visible church of Israel, to which these outward titles and privileges belonged who had not so much as a credible profession of real virtue, or holiness, or inward goodness; nor was it necessary, in order to be members of that church; for they not only came into this relation by their natural birth, as the sons of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but they always continued members of the church of Israel, so long as they continued members of the civil community, and were accounted parts of the nation, or kingdom of Israel: Their common immoralities did not cut them off from their civil rights, nor were they ever properly cast out of the state too; and according to the Bible, when they were cut off from their people, they lost their civil as well as ecclesiastical privileges.

V. On the other hand, the gentiles or heathens, that is, all the nations besides the Jews, had the visible marks of a people afar off from God, being neglected by him, and by their iniquities and their wretchedness they appeared as *children of wrath* under divine displeasure; *Eph.* ii. 3. By their own practice they abandoned God, and were *without God in the world;* Eph. ii. 11, 12. They were *children of disobedience,* as to the true God: They had another god, or ruler, even the devil, who is called *the god of this world,* this heathen world, and him they obeyed, he was their god; 2 *Cor.* iv. 4. He ruled in them as their prince, and they were carried captive by him, at his pleasure; *Eph.* ii. 2. To him they sacrificed, *even to devils, and not to* the true *God;* 1 Cor. x. 20. They walked in darkness, and ignorance; *Eph.* iv. 17, 18. and *were alienated from the life of*

* I think the language of the New Testament, in the texts which I have cited, makes it evident, that the jewish visible church was not so properly a type of the visible christian church, in its outward and visible form, as it was a type of the state and blessings of the true and real children of God, that is, of the invisible church of God in all ages; though it is granted, that the visible christian church is founded upon a supposition that the members of it are, or should appear to be members of the invisible church also, which was not the case in the visible jewish church, and the persons who composed it, whose church membership was built on another foundation.

God, because of the blindness of their heart; they were *dead in trespasses and sins, following the lusts of the flesh, and of the mind,* that is, carnal and spiritual iniquities; *Eph.* ii. 3. uncircumcised in flesh and heart, undevoted to God, strangers or *aliens from the covenants of promise,* without Christ, and without hope; *verse* 12. this is their literal character.

And as the Israelites are evidently figures of God's true invisible church, his real saints or holy ones, so the gentiles are evidently a figure and emblem of all the sinful world, the unholy, unconverted part of mankind, whether Jews or gentiles, whom I have before described as in a state of corrupt nature in the first proposition, and who are not born of God, or renewed by grace and repentance, and a sincere change of heart. The word uncircumcision is the very name and literal character of the gentiles, and it is used to signify sinful souls, unholy and unbeloved of God; *Jer.* ix. 26. The house of Israel is uncircumcised, that is, gentiles in heart, and unsanctified. In *Rom.* ii. 25—29. the words circumcision and uncircumcision are used both in their spiritual sense, to signify holiness and unholiness, as well as, in their literal sense, to denote judaism and gentilism, verse 25. *If thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision,* that is, thy person, notwithstanding all its marks of mortification, is counted unholy, unsanctified in the sight of God. The gentiles are described as a sinful character, *Gal.* ii. 15. *We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the gentiles.* And some suppose the ungodly, *Rom.* iv. 5. and *Rom.* v. 6. to signify the gentiles, where Paul says, *who believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly;* and *when we were without strength, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly.* The gentiles and the ungodly, or sinners, are used as synonymous terms; and the descriptions of them in scripture are much the same. The working of the will of the gentiles, is an expression to signify a sinful course of life, or an unconverted state, even by the apostle Peter, who was a Jew; 1 *Pet.* iv. 3.

Yet I would lay down this caution, that I do not hereby exclude every individual heathen at that time from the invisible church of God; for Jethro, at that time a Midianite, was probably a good man; and so might some others, upon the foot of Noah's covenant, even as several of the Jews were wicked men: But considering these two parts of mankind, Jews and gentiles, in the bulk, they were types and figures of the two sorts of people in the world, *viz.* the good and bad, or saints and sinners. And I think, it is pretty evident that the holy writers use the same sort of language which I have recited, in the first and fifth propositions, sometimes to signify the literal and external state of the gentiles, before the gospel came to them, and sometimes to signify the real, internal, and spiritual state of all who are not born again, not converted to God, nor renewed to holiness; and the one seems to be designed, by all these spiritual parallels as a type and emblem of the other.

VI. During the time of the jewish dispensation, there were always some of the Israelites really religious and holy, who were the spiritual seed of Abraham, as well as natural, that is, imitators of his faith and holiness; and, in this double sense, Abraham is their father; for, in the spiritual sense, he *is father of all who believe* and trust in God, and obey him, even of the gentile believers, as well as of the Jews; *Rom.* iv. 16. *Gal.* iii. 29. These religious Jews were real saints, members of the invisible church, and the true Israel, that is, they were in reality what the whole nation of Israel was, in type, and figure, and appearance; *Rom.* ix. 6. The apostle saith, *they are not all Israel which are of Israel, nor because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children,* implying that the

true Israel are really what the whole nation was visibly: And chapter ii. 29. *He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter only:* Such were not only the parts of God's visible church, and had the visible privileges thereof, but were also members of his invisible church, and the children of his special love.

But, at the same time, the bulk and multitude of the visible nation of Israel, which was the visible church, were generally great sinners, and with all their glorious titles of external and typical holiness and divine favour, they were inwardly wicked, and belonged really to the kingdom of Satan, and not to the invisible church of God. There were multitudes of *Sadducees* in that church, *who neither believed there was any angel or spirit*, any immortal soul in man, any resurrection of the dead, nor indeed any future state of rewards or punishments, and they lived according to these principles. Hopeful church-members indeed, if the jewish church had been to be composed of real saints! Another body of them were Pharisees, whose inward wickedness was great, as even many of their outward practices were very vile and abominable. It is certain, there were very many of them who continued for some time members of the outward visible jewish church, to whom John the Baptist and our blessed Saviour ascribed the vilest of characters relating to their inward and real state, *viz.* that they were *hypocrites, children of the devil*, they had him for their father, for they did his works, *a generation of vipers*, and such as *could not escape the damnation of hell.*

VII. When the times of the gospel came, God designed to set up a more spiritual kingdom, or visible church, in the world, which should come much nearer to his invisible church, in true and real holiness, than that of the Jews did; and of which there was frequent notice given by the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Malachi, and particularly by John the Baptist; Matt. iii. 9, 10. *Think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father, for God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham: Now the axe is laid to the root of the trees; therefore every tree, which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire.* If ever, therefore, you would be worthy members of such a church as God is going shortly to set up in the world, by introducing baptism, as the badge and seal of it, you must *bring forth fruits of repentance* and holiness.

Our Saviour also gives notice of the same thing to Nicodemus; John iii. 3. *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* It is as if John and Jesus had agreed to tell the Jews, "Your being born of Abraham will by no means secure to you any visible and eternal blessings in the kingdom of God, nor will your natural and fleshly relation to Abraham any longer constitute you members of the visible church, or of that kingdom which God is going to set up, unless you are born of the Spirit of God unto holiness of heart and life, or appear to be so, as far as the state of a visible church can require; unless you declare that you *repent and believe the gospel*, and make a credible profession of it, by bringing forth fruits, &c. for God will make a clearer discovery of his spiritual designs under the gospel, and that he has an invisible church which are all holy; and he will make his visible church much more like it than they were in the days of judaism, wherein several evident immoralities did not exclude them from church-fellowship, and the outward covenant of Abraham, if they did but perform their outward rites of religion, and, in cases of political or ceremonial defilement, fulfilled their purifications and atonements by proper washings and sacrifices: But now, the tree that brings not good fruit must be cut down, and cast out of the vineyard."

VIII. When God came to set up this more spiritual kingdom and church in the world, those among the Jews who professed that they received the Messiah, and submitted themselves to his holy and spiritual religion, were received by baptism, and were counted the people of God and his visible church, and they continued in all the visible privileges of church-fellowship in all their extent; and if their profession was sincere, they were entitled to all the inward privileges of the invisible church, and the spiritual blessings of the gospel.

Note, I do not mention any thing here relating to the infants of true believers, because I would not embarras the present argument with another controversy, and because they are at best but incomplete members of the christian church; and, in my opinion also, so far as they are acknowledged to be any way members of the visible christian church, it is upon a supposition of their being, together with their parents, members of the invisible church of God. I proceed therefore in my argument.

Every person then among the jewish nation who made a visible and credible profession of christianity with his lips, and in his life, was, in a judgment of charity, to be counted sincere in this profession, and consequently they were to be esteemed parts of the invisible church of God; Gal. vi. 16. *As many as walk according to this rule* of the gospel, *peace be on them and mercy, and upon all the Israel of God*, that is, upon all real saints. These believed in God and his promises, as Abraham did, and they become both the spiritual seed of Abraham, by imitating his faith and obedience, and children of God, by faith in Jesus Christ, *Gal.* iii. 26, 29. and heirs of the heavenly inheritance, according to his promise. These, among the common multitudes of the nation of Israel, are his special people Israel, *whom God foreknew*, and whom he hath not cast away, *Rom* xi. 1, 2. These are *the remnant, according to the election of grace*, verse 5. These are *the election which have obtained faith* and salvation, when the rest of the Israelites were blinded or hardened, *Rom.* xi. 7. These are the sons of God, brought into this relation by receiving Jesus Christ his Son, or believing in his name: These are said to be *born of God;* John i. 12, 13. Being *born of water, and of the Spirit*, that is, regenerated by his Holy Spirit, and washed with water, as the seal of it, they became actual visible members of this gospel-church, or the kingdom of God; *John* iii. 5, 6.

IX. Those particular persons among the jewish nation that rejected the Messiah, who was sent to be their prophet, priest and King, were cut off from all pretences to these spiritual privileges, and from all the inward blessings which were signified by their outward and carnal privileges; and they did also cut themselves off from the visible church, which God was then bringing into a purer and more spiritual frame, by renouncing the Son of God the Messiah, who was the King of Israel. These are become the Lo-ruhamah and Loammi, mentioned in *Hosea* i. 6, 9. For they are not the favourites, or beloved of God, they are not his people. These were the *natural branches* of Abraham's family, or the visible church, who, though they are of Israel, yet are not the true Israel; *Rom.* ix. 6. These are *the natural branches of the good olive-tree, who were broken off because of unbelief;* Rom. xi. 20, 21. and after the christian church was set up and established, they no more belonged to the visible church of God, as they did never at all belong to the invisible.

X. And when the christian church was thus set up and established in the world, the nation of the Jews, who were for the most part unbelievers in the Messiah, were cut off as a nation from all appearance of God's visible church and people, by the destruction of

their city and temple, and utter ruin of their state or commonwealth. Thus their being cut off from the privileges of being his visible church, as he was their God, and from being his visible subjects, as he was their king, considered as a public body and community, went hand in hand, as fast as human affairs could permit. The Jews were then, in a most notorious and visible manner, cast out of the favour and protection of their God and king, in the sight of the world, and abandoned of him; and since they renounced the Son of God, who was appointed their king, and slew him, and thereby filled up the measure of their iniquities, he also renounced them from being his subjects, or his kingdom: He sent the sword amongst them for their destruction, and *the wrath of God came upon them to the uttermost*, as that text has been usually explained; 1 *Thess.* ii. 14—16. and they have not so much as the face of a visible church or people of God remaining these sixteen hundred years. God has fulfilled his word, and cut them off, according to his threatenings, from their relation to him as their God, nor are they any longer his people; they have *left their names for a curse* to his chosen people, that is, the gospel-church made up chiefly of gentiles, who esteem the name of a Jew a reproach or a curse, and God has called his people *by another name*, that is, christians, as he threatened so plainly by Isaiah his prophet, chapter lxv. 15. These were the children of the kingdom concerning whom our Saviour foretels, that they should not sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, but *should be cast out into utter darkness;* Matt. viii. 11, 12.

XI. Those among the gentiles who received the Messiah, and believed in him, who practised faith and repentance, come into the real spiritual privileges, of which all the external glories of judaism were types and figures; even as the inwardly pious Jews of old had those spiritual blessings, which were typified by their own outward peculiarities. The gentile believers, who were naturally branches of *the wild olive, are grafted into the good olive-tree;* Rom. xi. 17, 18. They are the seed of Abraham, and he is their father; *Rom.* iv. 11, 16. *Gal.* iii. 8, 9, 29. They are called God's people *who were not his people;* Rom. ix. 24, 25. They are invested with the honourable titles which the carnal Jews enjoyed, 1 Pet. ii. 9, 10. *A chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.* And in Eph. ii. 19. *They are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God*, his elect, his beloved, and he dwells among them, and in them, as in his city and his temple, by his Holy Spirit, *verse* 22. and 1 *Cor.* vi. 19. and 2 *Cor.* vi. 16.

XII. As those gentiles who do really and inwardly receive the Messiah, and practise his religion in faith and holiness, come into all these inward, real, and spiritual privileges and blessings, so all that make a visible and credible profession of faith, and holiness, and universal subjection to Christ, come into all the outward privileges of the visible church under the gospel: Some few of which privileges are continued from the jewish church, but the greatest part of them are abolished, because the gospel state is more spiritual than the dispensation of the levitical law, and not such a typical state as that was; and none are to be admitted into this visible church, and esteemed complete members of it, but those who make such a declaration and profession of their faith in Christ, and their avowed subjection to him, as may be supposed, in a judgment of charity, to manifest them to be real believers in Christ, the true subjects of his spiritual kingdom, and members of the invisible church. See Proposition VII.

XIII. When therefore St. Paul and Peter write to the gentile christian churches, they

give them such honourable titles as these, *Holy brethren, called to be saints*, called and holy, *sanctified in Christ Jesus, the elect of God*, the beloved of God, washed from their sins, *justified, sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God, risen from a death in trespasses and sins, raised together with Christ, set down with him in heavenly places, followers of us, and of the Lord*, to whom the gospel *came, not in word only, but also in power, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, begotten to a lively hope by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, who have obtained precious faith through the righteousness of God and our Saviour, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people*, even the people of God, *who have now obtained mercy, &c.*

And the reason of these glorious titles is this, that they are members of the christian church, which receives none but upon profession of true faith in Christ, and sincere repentance; none but those who profess to be members of the invisible church, and, in a judgment of charity, are to be so esteemed: For persons of scandalous or immoral characters, or who walked disorderly, their fellow-members were warned not to keep them company, nor to eat with them; 1 *Cor.* v. 11. The church are required to withdraw from them, and they were to be cast out of the church; 2 *Thess.* iii. 6. *Purge out the old leaven*, saith the apostle, that is, *put away from among yourselves that wicked person*, who was amongst them, *that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened*, that is, without *the leaven of malice or wickedness;* 1 Cor. v. 7, 8, 13. And therefore the apostle, writing to the Philippians, charitably supposes them all to be in a state of grace; chapter i. 6. *Being confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in you, will perform or fulfil it unto the day of Jesus Christ, even as it is meet for me to think this of you all*, that is, to think you all, in general, real saints, in a judgment of charity, and without unreasonable suspicions of the credibility of your profession, or the sincerity of your hearts. It is granted indeed, there might be here and there single persons in primitive christian churches, whose apparent sinful lives deserved to have them cast out; such were among the Thessalonians and Philippians too: And, concerning such as these, the apostle here and there gives directions to withdraw from them, and to cast them out of the church, which was to be done by proper degrees. But this does not hinder the bulk or body of the church from being still esteemed, and called saints and holy brethren.

Objection 1. But was it not a sufficient qualification to become a member of a christian church, if a person professed the name of Christ in general, *viz.* that he would be of that sect or party in religion, without making what you call a credible profession, that is, without having such a serious spirit, nda a life of piety and virtue, as might give any just reason to conclude that person was a member of the invisible church.

Answer. This I have spoken of in another place, about christian communion, and therefore I shall only speak very briefly here, and say, that John the Baptist gave an early hint, that an entrance into the gospel-church was not to stand upon the same terms as that of the jewish: They were to *bring forth fruits meet for repentance*, as well as profess it; for *the axe is laid to the root of the tree;* Matt. iii. 7—10. And those will be cut off from their visible standing in the church *who bear not good fruit.* So Acts xix. 18. *Those that believed came and confessed, and shewed their deeds.*

Besides, it may be justly granted, that the mere present profession of the religion of Christ, against the general opposition of the world, and the danger of prosecution in those

primitive days, was reasonably counted as sufficient an evidence of inward repentance, faith, and true religion, as many weeks or months of outward visible piety and virtue might be in our day, because the profession of Christ is no matter of hazard and difficulty, as it was then. Far the greatest part of christian professors in that age were real inward christians, and all of them pretended and appeared to be so, on which account the apostles, in writing to them, give them those glorious titles and characters belonging properly to none but real saints. Nor can we justly suppose the apostle would give such sublime and blessed titles and characters to persons who were openly vicious and profane, under this spiritual dispensation of the gospel, whatever belief they professed of christian principles.

I would only ask upon this occasion, whether, if St. Paul were to write a letter to all that profess the christian religion in London at this day, all the ignorant, the stupid, the careless, and profane wretches who dwell in that great city, wherein the greatest part are visibly unholy, or at least have no visible appearances of holiness; I would ask, whether he would bestow these sacred titles upon them, and call them *holy brethren, elect of God, sanctified in* Christ Jesus, *faithful and beloved of God?* Surely, no; he could not do it; and therefore these sacred titles were given to the primitive christian churches, not as typically holy, but as professing themselves to be really and inwardly holy and religious, and in a judgment of charity appearing so to be.

Objection 2. But were not many of these sacred and glorious titles given to the whole church or nation of the Jews, the greatest part of which were so wicked, that our Lord and St. Paul agree, but *few of them should be saved?* Matt. vii. 14. Rom. ix. 27.

Answer. The jewish church and state were distinguished from other people and nations by such an external and typical holiness, as was designed to be an emblem of the invisible church, which was really and inwardly holy; and therefore these titles are given them only in an external, figurative, and typical sense, as having the outward emblems of those divine qualities, privileges and favours, which really and inwardly belong only to the church invisible; for the foundation both of their church and state was not so much as laid in a profession of inward holiness, but in being the seed of Abraham, and conforming to outward ceremonies. It was a much more carnal dispensation than that of the New Testament, and therefore it was an outward emblem of what is more real and spiritual under the gospel.

XIV. As the apostles, when they write to gentile christian churches, use the word *we*, and rank themselves amongst them in their present state of faith and holiness, so when they speak of their former state of corrupt nature, and before their conversion, they used the word *we* also, and rank themselves with them, as having been in a state of corrupt nature as well as the gentiles, before their faith and repentance, though they were never gentiles by nation, but Jews or Israelites. So Eph. ii. 1, 3. *You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein, in time past, ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation, in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.* Verse 5. *When we were dead in sins, God hath quickened us together with Christ.* Tit. iii. 3. *We ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another;* which, by the way, the learned author of "Miscellanea

Sacra" attributes particularly to St. Paul himself, in his unconverted state, volume II. page 63. See the same characters applied to St. Paul by the learned author of the "Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistle to Titus;" but I ask leave to include Titus and other gentile christians in the word *we*, and not confine it merely to the apostle himself, as that author does. The words hateful, and hating one another, ἀλλήλους, must imply mutual and reciprocal action, which is sufficient to prove, that St. Paul includes others, together with himself, in these vile characters. St. Peter expresses himself in the same manner when he was writing to the converted gentiles, 1 Pet. iv. 3. *The time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the gentiles when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.*

It is true, indeed, that Peter and Paul could not apply all these expressions personally to themselves in a state of nature and unconversion, in the same literal sense in which they might be applied to the gentile christians, in their unconverted state; but the apostles themselves, and the best of christians, were by nature such sort of sinners as might be figured out by these literal characters of the gentiles; as living too much without God, giving themselves up to their lusts and the idols of their heart, and to the course of a sinful world, and the temptations of the devil, so that they were inwardly and really in the sight of God such sort of sinful creatures in a state of corrupt nature, in a spiritual sense, as the gentiles were, in more visible outward appearance and practice: It is in this respect the heathens, as I said before, were figures or emblems of all the unconverted world, which lies in wickedness, and in this sense says the apostle, Eph. ii. 3. *We all*, that is, Jews and christians, as well as gentiles, *had our conversation in times past, and were dead in sins, and children of wrath, even as others*, that is, just objects of the wrath of God and condemnation, as well as the rest of the unconverted world.

Objection 1. But the apostles, when writing to gentile christians, would ingratiate themselves with them, and therefore, when they are going to speak hard things of the former conversation of these christian gentiles, they join themselves with them, and use the words *we* and *us* in a way of pleasing oratory and address, in order to take off the severity of reflection, and to obtain a better hearing.

Answer. But, for the sake of such pleasing oratory and address, we must not explain the apostles into direct falsehood: The words *we* and *us* in the plural, certainly include *I* and *me* in the singular; for though there are several places where the word *we* means only the single person who speaks, as 1 *Thess.* ii. 8. *We would have come to you*, even I Paul; and John xxi. 24. *We know;* and 1 John iii. 12. *We testify;* yet I believe there will hardly be found any place where the person speaking is quite excluded. Perhaps that text, 1 *Thess.* iv. 17. may be objected, *We which are alive, and remain at the coming of Christ, &c.* Could St. Paul suppose he should remain alive on earth till that time? I answer, yes, very probably; for this epistle was written the first of all St. Paul's epistles, and he might not then have it revealed to him, that Christ should delay his coming so long. And it is evident that, by some expressions in this very epistle, the Thessalonians were led into a supposition of Christ's very speedy appearance. See 2 *Thess.* ii. 2.* The apostles

* Perhaps it may be granted, that the pronouns *we* and *us* may signify sometimes the men of our nation, as *we* Jews, or people of our profession, as *we* christians, though it speaks of something done before they were born; because they are looked upon as one with all that nation, or all that profession; but this is so easily distinguished by the sense, that there is no danger of leading the hearer into a mistake, and doth not at all invalidate the present argument, concerning the universal corruption of Jews and gentiles.

therefore, when they use the word *we*, took their share in these self-accusing expressions, concerning their sinful state by nature; and if there be not a literal sense wherein these expressions were true concerning the apostles, there must be a kindred, similar or spiritual sense, wherein it is true of them, according to their own design and meaning, lest we make them speak false things in a compliment. They, together with the gentile idolaters, were therefore in reality children of wrath by nature, or in a state of depraved nature and guilt, though the gentiles had more outward and visible marks of it than the Jews.

Objection 2. But was not Paul, even when he was a Pharisee, a man of morals, a man who *lived in all good conscience*, as he testifies of himself; *Acts* xxiii. 1. and *touching the righteousness that was in the law blameless;* Phil. iii. 6. Nor have we any ground to think Peter was really one of those wicked persons, though he says, 1 Pet. iv. 3. *We walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revelling, banqueting, and abominable idolatries.*

Answer 1. There is no need among such catalogues always to apply every single character to every single person included in the plural number *we*. Even among the heathens themselves, there were some who might not be actual gluttons, or given to excess of wine, and to whom every one of these characters could not be literally applied; but all these characters, in general, must be scattered and distributed amongst the *we*, of whom they were spoken. There are instances of this sort of speech in many places of scripture. See, for instance, *Heb.* xi. 32, 33. Gideon, Barak, Samson, &c. and *the prophets, who, through faith, subdued kingdoms, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, &c.* Not that each of these performed all these exploits, but some did one and some another. So when the apostle says, *we wrought the will of the gentiles, walking in rioting, excess of wine, idolatry, &c.* some of these predicates must, in some sense or another, belong to the apostles, at least as part of the sinful race of mankind, Jews as well as gentiles, in order to secure their veracity; for we must not explain them so, as to make the apostles yield up the truth of things to complaisance and fair speech, especially in such cases wherein a multitude of their readers would be very liable to mistake them.

Answer 2. In general, it must be acknowledged, that as we are in a state of depraved nature, the seeds and principles of all iniquities are found in us, both the lusts of the flesh and the mind, and in this sense all men, by nature, have the springs of all sin in them: Nor is this a harder censure than the apostle Paul lays upon all mankind, Jews and gentiles, without the exception of one individual, when he cites out of the Old Testament the several characters of wicked men; *Rom.* iii. 9—19. and pronounces them true in general concerning Jews and gentiles; and some of them belong to every particular person in the world; *all are under sin*, that is, in a state of nature; *there is none righteous, no, not one; there is no fear of God before their eyes, &c. Thus every mouth is stopped; and all the world*, even every individual son and daughter of Adam, *is guilty before God; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.* And that this includes every individual person is evident; because otherwise there would be some persons who need not justification by grace, through the redemption of Christ, which is the only relief which the apostle proposes for all mankind in the following verses.

Thus it is made pretty evident, that the good characters of the Jews, as God's chosen visible church, are applied by the writers of the New Testament to all true christians,

even gentiles as well as Jews; and the evil characters of the gentile world are applied to all sinners in a state of nature and unconverted, as well Jews as gentiles.

XV. From all this discourse there appears a sufficient reason why the prophecies and promises of the Old Testament, which display the mercy of God to the jewish nation, are often cited in the New Testament, as belonging to true christians, and applicable to them, whether Jews or gentiles; because the Jews were the figure of the true church of God, and the spiritual meaning of those promises is designed to be applied to all who are the true Israel of God, that is, truly pious, whether Jews or gentiles. See for instance, Lev. xxvi. 11, 12. *I will set my tabernacle or dwelling among you: I will walk among you, and be your God, and you shall be my people.* Jer. xxxi. 1. *I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people.* Which promises are made expressly to the Jews in the Old Testament; but St. Paul applies them to the Corinthian christians, 2 Cor. vi. 16. *I will dwell in* or among them, and *walk among them: I will be their God, and they shall be my people.* So again Isaiah lii. 11. *Depart ye, depart, go out from thence, touch no unclean thing, &c. and the Lord will go before you.* These words are addressed to Jerusalem and Israel only; but St. Paul addresses the gentile converts in the same manner: *Come out, or depart from among them, and be ye separate,* saith the Lord, *and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, &c.*; 2 Cor. vi. 17. And then he tells them these promises are theirs, chapter vii. 1. So Isaiah lx. 1. *Arise, shine, for thy light is come,* is applied to the Ephesian christians, Eph. v. 14. *Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, &c.* And such kind of promises may be used and improved by us gentile christians; *for they were written for our instruction, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope;* Rom. xv. 4. and therefore in verse 10. *Rejoice, ye gentiles, with his people.*

And, in the same manner, the promises of the Old Testament, which are made to the gentiles, may be assumed and pleaded by sinners, who are in a state of corrupt nature, in order to their obtaining grace and salvation, because the gentiles were a type and emblem of them, Isaiah xlv. 22. *Look unto me from the ends of the earth and be saved.* And *Hosea* i. 10. and ii. 23. which are cited by Paul to the Romans, *I will call them my people which were not my people;* chapter ix. 24—26. Where it is said, *ye are not my people, there shall they be called the children of the living God.* Which scriptures may be very appositely and properly applied to encourage the worst of sinners to come to God, by the gospel of Christ, even those that are, as it were, in the ends of the earth, afar off from any relation to God or his people.

Recapitulation.—The sum and design of these propositions may be thus represented in short. There are but two sorts of persons in the world, saints and sinners, the holy and the unholy. The Jews and gentiles stand in scripture as figures or emblems of these two sorts, that is, of saints and sinners; or of the invisible church of God, and of the wicked world; the one under the kingdom of God, the other under the kingdom of Satan: For the visible church of God, in the Old Testament, was under its typical and shadowy administration; and this visible jewish church, into which persons were admitted by being born of Israel, was a type of all that are really the subjects of God's kingdom of grace, being born of God; whereas the heathens, who were not of this visible church and kingdom of God, were subjects of the visible kingdom of Satan, and were types of all that are really in a state of corrupt nature, and so are subjects of the devil.

In the times of the gospel, God introduced a more spiritual state and economy, even

of his visible church, and appointed our entrance into it to be made by a visible profession of our being born of God, of real faith in Christ, of true repentance and inward holiness; supposing that the christian visible church ought to be composed of such persons who, in a judgment of charity, should have those inward spiritual qualities which were denoted by the jewish outward privileges, forms and ceremonies, and which should render them real members of the invisible church of God.

And therefore the apostles, in writing to christian churches, speak of unconverted, or unsanctified persons, under the common descriptions and characters which literally belonged to the heathen or gentile nations in the days of their heathenism: And when they speak of the visible members of christian churches, it is under the common descriptions and characters which literally belonged to the jewish nation or church, as a type of the spiritual invisible church; and the reason is, because visible christians are all bound to profess these characters, in their spiritual sense, that is, real inward holiness, and special relation to God, and, in a judgment of charity, they are to be esteemed as possessing these characters and qualifications. Thence it follows, that these glorious and holy characters are not ascribed to professing christians, in that typical and figurative sense in which these characters were applied to the jewish church and nation, because the Jews were but a type or emblem of what God's invisible church always was, and what the christian visible church ought to be; and if the discipline of the primitive days were still practised, every christian church would be such as might be charitably presumed to have all these inward and glorious characters; and however possibly there might be some particular wicked persons in it who deserved to be cast out, yet this did not hinder the bulk and body of them from enjoying these honourable appellations, as supposing them to be saints indeed. And hence also it comes to pass, that many of the promises made to the Jews of old are applied, in the New Testament, to all true christians for their comfort; and the promises made to the gentiles may be applied to great sinners, to encourage their hope: But this must be understood only where the state and circumstances, either of saints or sinners, are such as to stand in need of those promised blessings, and to render such promises pertinent to their case. *Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we,* both Jews and Romans, *through these scriptures, might have hope and divine consolation;* Rom. xv. 6.

And indeed, without such a liberty of explaining and applying the promises of the Old Testament to our own souls, as the apostles have taught us, for our private and spiritual advantage, a good part of the writings of the prophets, even some of those which refer to the days of the Messiah, would be impoverished and drained of many of their richest blessings, and would become of little use to us, unless it were for the mere proof of the truth of christianity: Whereas there is a rich and heavenly treasure of grace and blessings contained in these *exceeding great and precious promises,* and transferred to the gentile church under the New Testament; which treasure is opened and unfolded to us, and set before us by this doctrine, which the holy apostles have taught us, both by their word and practice, and which I have now been endeavouring to establish. Upon many of these ancient promises have true christians lived, in all succeeding ages, as well as in the apostolic times, and in them they have found support and relief under their temptations and sufferings: So what was spoken by the Lord to Joshua for his support and encouragement, is applied to all christians by the apostle. See Joshua i. 5. and Heb. xiii. 5. *I will never fail thee, nor forsake thee.*

These words of grace have drawn sinners near to God, under the gospel, by the language of the Old Testament happily applied to their consciences. *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters,* that is, *the waters of life;* Isaiah lv. 1. compared with Rev. xxii. 17. *Let him that is athirst, come and take of the water of life freely.* It is by many of these *exceeding great and precious promises* that the gentiles have been *made partakers of the divine nature, and have escaped the corruptions of the world;* 2 Pet. i. 4. It is by these the christian church has been gathered and animated, has been nourished and propagated to this day. These promises, which were given *to the Jews, and to their children, shall be made good to those that are afar off,* that is, the gentiles; *even to as many as the Lord our God shall call;* Acts ii. 39. *For in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek;* Gal. iii. 28. *but all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God;* 2 Cor. i. 20.

THE

DOCTRINE

OF THE

PASSIONS

EXPLAINED AND IMPROVED.

THE

PREFACE.

THE motions of the heart of man are infinitely various : The different forms and shapes in which our passions appear, the sudden and secret turns and windings of them through the heart, with the strange mixtures and complications of them, in their continual exercise, are innumerable and nameless. It is as hard, almost, to reduce them to a perfect scheme, and to range all their excursions into exact order of science, as it is to bring them under complete government in practice.

Yet, since it is of such vast importance in human life, to regulate their motions, that they may not become utterly exorbitant and mischievous, I thought it proper, for this end, to make a diligent enquiry into the nature of these mingled powers of flesh and spirit, to take a survey of them in a comprehensive view, and draw them into a little system. With no small care, I have attempted, to range them in some tolerable order and method under general names, to trace out and observe their causes, their effects, their influences on human affairs, and the various purposes which they serve in the life of man. This is not only desirable, as it is a part of the science of human nature, or the knowledge of ourselves, without which, we can never pretend to be philosophers; but this may also give us some assistance toward the forming proper rules for their better management, and the bringing these active and restless promoters, or disturbers of our happiness, under a moral and religious discipline; and without this, we can neither be men of wisdom nor piety.

The natural affections of man are designed for valuable ends in life, when put under due government: They will render difficult duties easy, and relieve many of the troubles and fatigues of the present state. But if they are let run loose without controul, or, if they are abused, and employed to wrong purposes, they become the springs and occasions of much mischief and misery.

The interests of virtue and vice are greatly concerned in this matter. The regulation of the passions is a thing of unspeakable moment to us, considered either as men, or as christians. Ungoverned passions break all the bonds of human society and peace, and would change the tribes of mankind into brutal herds, or make the world a mere wilderness of savages. Passion unbridled would violate all the sacred ties of religion, and raise the sons of men in arms against their Creator. Where passion runs riot, there are none of the rights of God or man secure from its insolences.

But when these vehement powers of nature are reduced to the obedience of reason, it renders our conduct amiable and useful to our fellow-creatures, and makes virtue shine in

the world in its proper ornaments; this will go a great way to procure our own ease and happiness, so far as it is attainable in this life, and it will tend to make our neighbours happy as ourselves. What is the true use or abuse of the passions in religious affairs, is very little mentioned in this treatise, because it is the whole professed subject and design of those Discourses of the Love of God, &c. which were joined with this treatise in the first edition of it, and I intend shall be shortly published again:* But these two books now stand separate, that readers of a different genius may please themselves. Thus much I may be permitted to say here, that the soul which governs its affections by the sacred dictates of reason and religion, and keeps itself at a proper loose from every creature, stands much less exposed to the injuries and sorrows of life, and is better prepared to part with all earthly comforts at the call of Providence. Such a happy temper of mind will enable us cheerfully to resign life itself, with all its mortal interests, at the appointed hour, and to enter gloriously upon the nobler employments, and the diviner joys that await us in the upper world.

* This "Doctrine of the Passions," in the first edition of it, stood merely as an introduction to the "Discourses of the Love of God, and the Use and Abuse of the Passions in Religion:" But being corrected and enlarged, it is now published alone as a distinct treatise. "The Discourses of the Love of God, &c." are also printed by themselves.

THE

DOCTRINE OF THE PASSIONS.

SECTION I.

THE VARIOUS SENSES OF THE WORD.

THE word passion, in the abstracted and logical sense of it, denotes the receiving of the action of some agent: As if an archer bend his bow, the archer is the agent; the bow is the patient; the bending, as it comes from the archer, is the action; but as it terminates in the bow, it is called the passion. But this is entirely a philosophical sense of the word, and never used in common life; therefore I dismiss it. Yet we may just take notice, that the term passion sometimes signifies any painful suffering of soul and body: For, it is in this sense we use it, when we speak of the passion of Christ, whereby we mean his agony in the garden, and especially his death on the cross; and so it is used in our translation of the Bible; *Acts* i. 3. *He shewed himself alive after his passion.*

Passions, in this discourse, signify the same with natural affections in general, such as love, hatred, joy, hope, anger, sorrow, &c. Here we may observe, that the term passion is often used in conversation in a more limited sense, to denote one of these particular affections, *viz.* anger or sudden resentment; as the word affection is used sometimes also in a limited sense, and signifies love. So we say, Moses was once in a passion, whereby we mean he was angry; or, Jonah was a passionate man, that is, he was given to sudden and violent resentments: And, in the same manner, we say, David had an affection for Jonathan, that is, he loved him: Or, St. John was a very affectionate man, that is, he was of a loving and kind disposition. But in this discourse we take passion and affection to mean the same thing, and to extend to any of these powers or principles in human nature, which were just mentioned; such as love, joy, &c.

The name of passion seems to have been given originally to these affections of human nature, either from the impressions or commotions which the animal powers receive by the soul's perception of that object which raises the passion, or from the impression or sensation which the soul receives by this commotion of the animal powers, or perhaps from both these, as this subject will be afterward explained.

SECTION II.

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE PASSIONS, TOGETHER WITH A GENERAL DIVISION OF THEM INTO THREE RANKS.

IT is evident from the nature of things, that there must be in pure and separate spirits some affections correspondent to most of those passions which our spirits feel who dwell in animal bodies. They have love and hatred, desire and aversion, joy and sorrow, fear

and hope, as well as we: But while we dwell in these bodies, the affections of our minds will be accompanied with some commotions of animal nature, and some peculiar sensations, whereby, as I hinted, they obtain the name of passions. Now it is exceeding hard, if not impossible, for us precisely to distinguish how far the animal nature, and how far the mind or spirit, are concerned in producing all these effects, and in raising these sensations or commotions which we call passions. I shall confine myself, therefore, in this discourse, only to give some account of these complex workings of our compound nature, as we find them in our present embodied state.

The passions may be thus described: They are those sensible commotions of our whole nature, both soul and body, which are occasioned by the perception of an object according to some special properties that belong to it. See Section III. Remark 2 and 3.

An object which is suited to excite the passions, must have one of these three properties, *viz.* it must be either rare and uncommon, or good and agreeable, or evil and disagreeable: Or at least we must have such an idea and apprehension of it before it can excite any passion in us.

Now if we will distinguish the chief passions of our nature according to their objects, and confine ourselves to the common words and names whereby they are usually called, we may make three ranks of them; which, for distinction's sake, I shall name the first, second, and third rank. The two first are primitive, the third is derivative.

The first rank of passions are these three; admiration, love, and hatred.

If the object be rare or uncommon, it excites admiration or wonder. If we look on it as good or any way agreeable to us, it may engage our love; but if it be evil or disagreeable, it moves our hatred. Note here, I take the words good and evil, and consequently, the words love and hatred, in a very large sense, which I shall account for afterwards.

The second rank of chief passions are the divers kinds of love and hatred, which also are distinguished by their objects.

If the object appear valuable, it raises a love of esteem; if worthless, the hatred is called contempt.

If the object appear fit to receive good from us, it is love of benevolence, or good-will: If it appear rather fit to receive evil from us, the hatred is called malevolence, or ill-will. If the object appear pleasing, and fit to do us good, it raises the love of complacence, or delight; if it be displeasing, and unfit to do us good, it excites a displicence, or dislike.

From love and hatred in their different kinds, but chiefly from complacence and displicence, arise several more chief passions, which may be called the third rank, and which are also distinguished by their objects. Note, In this pair of passions, complacence and displicence, and in all the third rank, which is chiefly derived from them, the pleasing object is more properly called evil, than in the passions before mentioned.

If the good be absent or unpossessed, and possible to be obtained, the passion of love grows up to desire; if the evil may possibly come upon us, the hatred expresses itself in aversion, or avoidance: Though there may be also an aversion to some evil from which we are sufficiently secure. If there be any prospect of obtaining the absent good, there is a passion excited which is called hope; but if the absent evil be likely to come upon us, it raises the passion of fear.

Fear also arises from a present or expected good in danger of being lost: And there is a hope of security from some absent threatening evil, or of deliverance from some evil

that is present. If the good be actually obtained, or the evil prevented, it excites our joy and gladness; if the good be actually lost, or the evil come upon us, it causes sorrow and grief. Whoever helps us to attain this good, or prevents the evil, excites in us gratitude: Whosoever hinders our attainment of good, or promotes the evil, raises our anger.

There are very few, if any, of the passions for which we have any name, and which are usually taken notice of in the heart of man; but they may be reduced to some or other of those general heads, as I shall explain them. I do not pretend to lay down this distinction and arrangement of the passions of man, as an uncontroverted or certain thing: But upon the best survey I can take of the various workings of the heart of man, as well as of the several authors who have written on this subject, I do not find any of them lead me into an easier or better scheme than this. A good logical scheme and arrangement of things has some advantages in it; it shews us the relations of various things to each other, their correspondences, their similitudes, and differences; and it greatly assists the memory: But it is still of more importance to describe the several passions with justice and truth as they are in nature, than to range them in logical classes and just order.

SECTION III.

A FURTHER ACCOUNT OF THE NATURE OF THE PASSIONS, IN SOME REMARKS CONCERNING THEM.

IT appears by what I have already said, that the passions are certain principles or powers in man of a mixed nature, belonging partly to the soul or mind, and partly to the animal body, that is, the flesh and blood: For it is evident, that when we perceive any object with such properties as are before mentioned, we find usually some ferments of the blood, or natural spirits,* or some alterations which affect the body, as well as we feel special impressions on our minds. What these special ferments are, or what the distinct commotions of the nerves, or inward parts of animal nature of the several distinct passions, is not easy to determine with exactness: It requires a good skill in anatomy, and long and watchful observation of the workings of the several passions, to write on this subject with success. The ingenious Descartes has aimed at it in his treatise on this subject, and perhaps hath as happily performed it as could be expected, considering how much less acquaintance with animal nature the learned world had arrived at in his age. I proceed now to give some further account of these pathetic powers of human nature by the following remarks:

I. It is not necessary that the object which excites our passions, should be something actually present with us; for if there be but the idea of it found in the mind or imagination, it is sufficient to raise intense passions; sometimes horror and fear may be unruly and violent when the objects or occasions of them are far distant; but they are supposed to be approaching: And sometimes the very absence of pleasing or displeasing objects may be the occasion of grief or joy; but it is then the perception of this absence that is the immediate cause of them.

* What I call here natural spirits, are sometimes called animal or vital spirits, which are supposed to be the springs or mediums of animal motions, both inward and outward: But whether these be some refined spirituous liquids, or vapours drawn off from the blood, or whether they be nothing else but the elastic or springy parts of the air drawn in by respiration, and mingled with the blood and other animal juices, is not yet agreed by philosophers.

II. The passions are wont to be described as mere inward sensations.* But since there are some few of the passions that include acts of volition in them, or some propensities or outgoings of the will, as well as perceptions of the mind, such as the passions of desire, aversion, and their species, I choose rather in this place to describe the passions in general, as some sensible commotions of our whole nature, both soul and body, which description may perhaps more fully comprehend all the passions.

III. Though most of the passions are confessed to be sensations, yet I have frequently in my "Discourses of the Love of God, &c." called them active and sprightly powers, because some of them include the act of the will in them, and very few of them are so entirely passive, but they have a tendency to excite the person to lively and vigorous actions of some kind or other: And indeed this is the chief design of them in the nature of man.

IV. Because several of the passions, or these commotions of animal nature, do particularly affect the heart, therefore the heart, in the common sense of mankind, is reckoned the seat of the passions, and they are sometimes called the passions of the heart. It was probably from this observation, that some ancient philosophers and writers, among other nations, as well as the Jews, supposed the heart to be the special seat and residence of the soul or intellectual spirit, and on this account the heart in scripture, as well as in heathen writings, is used to signify the soul itself.

V. The ferment of the animal juices, and the motion of the blood, are not the only things which are affected while passion is raised; for most of the passions have some effects on the colour or features of the countenance, and especially on the eyes, and discover themselves by gestures or voices, or other outward signs: So sorrow is discovered by tears and groans, mirth by laughter, joy by a smiling countenance, and anger by frowning, &c. Whence it comes to pass that many of them are so happily imitated by painters.

VI. It is true, that the passions are generally, if not always, raised or occasioned by the perception of some object, according to the special properties that belong to it; yet there are several things in the nature and the life of man which greatly dispose the heart to particular passions, and render it much more susceptive of them; such as age, constitution, health or sickness, weather, &c. which I shall hereafter enumerate more particularly.

VII. Though the complexion of some persons make them more susceptive of these pathetic commotions in general than others are, and though the natural or accidental state or circumstances of some persons, and at certain seasons, dispose them more to particular passions, such as fear, anger, joy, hope, &c. yet there is scarce any person, whatsoever be his complexion, or his age, or his circumstances, who makes a strict and narrow observation of what passes within him, but will find almost all the passions of nature, at one time or other, rising in him in greater or less degrees.

VIII. Though the chief, and the original passions are these which were before named, *viz.* wonder, love, hatred, esteem, contempt, &c. yet they include a great variety of particular affections under them. In many of the passions the ferments of flesh and blood, and the sensations and motions of the mind, are so exceeding swift and momentaneous,

* I have sometimes described the passions, as the soul's sensations of some commotions in animal nature, arising from the perception of peculiar objects. And I think it is not of much importance whether they be called the soul's sensations of commotions in the body, or sensible commotions of soul and body. I am sure both are included in every passion.

they are so joined and complicated with each other, and they run so often into one another in an undistinguished mixture, that it is exceeding hard to give such an accurate and distinct account of all of them as one would wish or desire.

IX. There is another thing, also, that makes a just and accurate scheme of the passions very difficult, if not impossible; and that is, that the language of men has sometimes made one word to signify very different passions or appetites; as for instance, the word love signifies gluttony, which is the love of eating good victuals; and friendship, which is the love of an equal intelligent being; and ambition, which is the love of honour; and concupiscence or lust; all these are called love. So modesty, which is the spring of innocent blushes, and the guard of virtue; and that blush of confusion and dishonour, which is the just effect of guilt, are both called shame. These are different ideas, but the same name still. Again, the language of men hath sometimes combined and associated several ideas of different passions into one word, or name; such as jealousy, suspicion, envy: And sometimes where the passions themselves have scarce any difference, yet there are different names for them, as anger, and wrath, and fury: And there are many other combined passions that have no name. A perfect scheme therefore is not to be expected.

X. Finally, I would give my readers notice, that several of these principles, qualities, or tempers in men, which I have ranked among the passions, may be called virtues and vices; as pride, envy, good-will, compassion, &c. and are so described by the writers of morality: But since they are often attended with particular ferments or commotions of animal nature, and distinct sensations of the mind, I have given them a place among the passions. These things being premised, I proceed now to give some account of each general or original passion, with the particulars contained under it.

SECTION IV.

OF ADMIRATION OR WONDER.

THE most primitive and original passions, or those of the first rank, are admiration, love, and hatred.

First, Admiration. When we perceive any object that is rare and uncommon, that is new and strange, either for its kinds, or for its qualities; or when we meet with such an occurrence or event as is unusual or unexpected; or such as is at least unusual, at such a particular time and place, we are struck with admiration or wonder: And that without any consideration, whether the object be valuable or worthless, whether it be good or evil. We wonder at a very great or a very little man, a dwarf or a giant; at a very little horse, at a huge snake or toad, at an elephant, or a whale, or a comet, or at any rare performances of art, as moving machines, such as clocks, watches with a variety of uncommon motions and operations; we wonder at a piece of extraordinary wit, skill or learning; even at artificial trifles, as a flea kept alive in a chain; at any uncommon appearances in nature discovered by a telescope, a microscope, &c. Admiration has no regard to the agreeableness or disagreeableness of the object, but only the rarity of it. And for this reason wonder seems to be the first of the passions.

If the object which is rare and uncommon appear to us on a sudden, or in an unex-

pected moment, we give it the name of surprize. If our wonder arise to a high degree, we call it amazement or astonishment.

This passion discovers itself by lifting up of the hands or the eyes, and by an intense fixation of the sight or the thoughts. When it rises very high on a sudden, it will stop the voice, and reduce the person as it were to the fixed posture and silence of a statue for a few moments, this is called stupor. And if fear be joined with it, it will produce more unhappy effects.

Let it be observed, that this passion has properly no opposite, because if the object be not rare or new, or if the appearance be not sudden or unexpected, but a mere common and familiar thing, or an expected occurrence, we receive it with great calmness, and feel no such commotion of nature about it; we treat it with neglect instead of wonder: Now, neglect is no passion. The rest of the passions, at least the most of them, go in pairs.

Let us take notice also, that admiration is most frequently excited in young persons, and such as have had but little opportunity of furnishing themselves with the knowledge of various things, either in nature or Providence, or in the sciences; whereas wise and learned men, who have seen or known a large variety of objects and events, seldom find things rare and new, or strange enough to wonder at.

I might observe also, that those who are of a very heavy and stupid genius, have not curiosity or sprightliness enough in their constitution to take notice of things new and strange; and they are not very subject to admiration. Thus it appears, why wise men and fools do not so often wonder, as persons of a middle rank of genius or improvement.

The great end and design of this passion of admiration, is to fix our attention upon the admired object, to impress it more effectually upon our memory, as well as to give a sensible delight to the mind of man, which loves newness and variety; and especially where the object has any thing in it that is valuable or agreeable, which would incline us to esteem or love it. This leads me to the next general passions of the first rank.

SECTION V.

LOVE AND HATRED.

The motions of the mind, and the correspondent ferments of the blood, are very numerous in our natures, and are not always happily distinguished by those words and names, which have been commonly applied to them. When we treat of any subject, we must for the most part take the names of things as we find them, for there is no possibility of making the bulk of mankind, for whom we write, change their usual forms of speech, in order to obtain a more philosophical exactness. The next primitive passions therefore, I continue to call love and hatred.

Love, in general, implies some approbation of, or propensity towards what appears to us as good: Hatred, is a disapprobation of, or aversion to what appears to us as evil. But the words good and evil, in human languages, being extended to a vast variety of different objects, the names of love and hatred, but especially love, have been used in as great a variety of significations, and are become very equivocal words, that is, words of many meanings. And therefore, I take love and hatred, here, in so general a sense, as

may be applied to all those passions which arise from the several objects, which may be called good or evil.

In this general sense therefore, the word good may signify any thing that we can look upon with esteem, with good-will, or with delight; and evil may be extended to mean whatsoever we view with contempt, with ill-will, or with disgust: And hence arises the second rank of general or primitive passions, viz. esteem and contempt, good-will and ill-will, delight and disgust, all which are but different kinds of love and hatred.

SECTION VI.

ESTEEM AND CONTEMPT.

The first sort of love is called esteem, and its opposite is contempt. I grant that these words, esteem and contempt, may be sometimes used to signify a calm and sedate judgment of the mind, concerning those objects which are either valuable or worthless. Yet if we will enter into ourselves, and consider our own inward sensations, and what passes within us, we shall find that when we esteem or despise any thing, in a high degree, it will cause some ferment of the blood and natural spirits, or some commotion in animal nature. I know some writers have made esteem and contempt to be species of admiration: But there are several reasons for which I think they are much better ranked under love and hatred, especially since they suppose some degree of good or evil, that is, worthiness or unworthiness in the object.

Esteem is that passion which arises from the mere consideration of some excellency, or something that is valuable in an object, and it belongs either to persons or things. Contempt arises from the mere consideration of a worthless object, and especially if it be proposed to us with a pretence of excellency in it. So we esteem a good picture and the hand that drew it, or a good piece of clockwork and its author: But we contemn an ill painting or any bungling performance, as well as the maker of it, that is considered in that view. And if any plain and common engine be made well, yet if it be proposed to us as a pretended piece of art, in that view we despise it.

If our esteem be raised by an object which has any thing in it either grand and sublime, or solemn, and sacred, it is called reverence or veneration. So we reverence the persons and the counsels of our parents and superiors: We have a veneration for the Holy Bible, for the memory of the prophets and apostles, and for the names of St. Austin and Sir Isaac Newton. And, I think, when this veneration or high esteem has God for its object, it may be properly termed adoration or inward worship.

Our esteem of God, or adoration, manifests itself in never mentioning his name without awe and reverence, in bowing the knee, in prayer and praise, in all the several forms of outward devotion, and in quick resentment of any dishonour done to him. Our high esteem or veneration of a man appears in an humble respectful behaviour toward him, speaking his praises, imitating his excellencies, and resenting his dishonours. Contempt discovers itself by turning the back, shrinking up the nose, thrusting out the lip, by derision and laughter, and terms of ridicule and jeering.

As we esteem an excellent object, and contemn what is worthless; so it may be enquired here, whether there be not a sort of affection which arises especially towards an intelligent

object that has some disagreeable or dishonourable qualities, and which we may call disesteem or disapprobation. Dishonourable qualities are distinct from those which are merely worthless, and raise a motion of the mind, a little different from contempt. Nor yet is disesteem quite the same thing with displicence.

As we manifest our esteem, disesteem, and contempt of other persons and things; so we ourselves may be the objects of the same affections working in our own minds. If we esteem ourselves and our own good qualities no higher than they deserve, it has been called by some writers generosity, which is a just sense of one's own worth, and which has some valuable effects in human life: But this word is more used for bounty.

A due courage, a just fortitude, and magnanimity, a readiness to meet dangers, or to undertake great exploits, are the natural effects of this generosity. And, if at the same time, we consider that our nature is subject to many errors, follies, and weaknesses, and that we have been guilty of many actions that diminish our reputation, honour or worth; that will raise in us some disapprobation or disesteem of ourselves. This is the becoming affection of humility, which is very consistent with the generosity before mentioned.

If this sense of our own weakness spring not from a just judgment and estimation of things, but merely from a certain frailty and infirmity of the mind, and arise to a greater degree than it ought, and especially if it sink the spirits, and overwhelm us with an unreasonable confusion, it is called abjectness of spirit, which often appears in a sort of awkwardness in behaviour, in perpetual and unreasonable bashfulness, in sheepish and downcast looks, and unmanly carriage and conduct.

From this abjectness of spirit rises cowardice and meanness of soul, and an inability to attempt any thing great and glorious, as well as an inclination to practise mean and low flatteries, and base submissions without reason. But on the other hand, if a man has too high an esteem of his own good qualities, and his own merit, this excites the vicious affections of pride and self-sufficiency, conceit and vanity. This is sometimes called arrogance, because it assumes and attributes to self more than is due: Sometimes it is termed self-admiration; but then the word admiration here does not signify wonder, but esteem.

From this pride and self-conceit, many times springs an undue courage, or boldness to attempt what is too high and hard for us; which is properly called temerity, or rashness, and is not true fortitude, or greatness of soul. Hence also arise haughtiness and insolence in our carriage toward our fellow-creatures, and scorn and disdain toward those whom we think much beneath us.

We have so much of pride, vanity, and self-love in us by nature, that we take all occasions to borrow from every thing that has any relation to us, some fine plumes to dress ourselves in, and to advance our self-esteem. We value ourselves for our country or nation, for our native town, for our ancestors or family, if any thing excellent or honourable have been ever reported concerning them. We are so senseless, as to pride ourselves in being first in trifles, or chief even in worthless or vicious qualities.

This evil principle of pride is discovered oftentimes by an affected mien and air, by a toss of the head, by a lofty look, by a stately and strutting gait and gesture, by dwelling at a looking-glass, by talking much of one's self or family, by speaking to equals in a scornful tone, as though they were much our inferiors, and by speaking to inferiors and treating them as though they were cattle.

Though the terms of scorn and disdain are generally applied to the character of pride

and arrogance, yet they may be sometimes used in a good sense; as when a man of honour, a man of virtue, a person of a generous and great soul disdains and scorns to stoop to any mean and base practice, even under the strongest temptations.

Here let it be observed, according as I have before hinted in general, that generosity and humility may be called virtues rather than passions; because the ferments which are raised by them in the blood and natural spirits, are very small, and not often sensible: But pride and abjection of mind, may be justly counted passions, as well as infirmities or vices of nature, for both of them betray themselves very sensibly in animal nature, in the outward behaviour, in the countenance and the gestures.

Though these two passions, *viz.* abjection and pride, seem to be contrary to each other, yet they very commonly meet in the same persons: For those who in prosperous circumstances are puffed up with pride, and carry it with a haughty disdain and insolence towards their neighbours, are oftentimes found to be of a mean and cowardly soul, and sink into the greatest meanness and abjectness of spirit, when adverse providence and calamity attend them.

The mind that is generous and humble, that has a just and becoming apprehension of its own worth, and a lowly sense of its frailties, maintains generally a more equal temper in different circumstances of life, and possesses the pleasing virtue which we call equanimity.

SECTION VII.

BENEVOLENCE AND MALEVOLENCE.

THE second sort of love is called benevolence or good-will. But before I divide it into several kinds, I would distinguish it from the love of complacence or delight; and indeed, if words or names were now to be coined and appropriated to these two sorts of love, as they are called, I should scarce use the word love to signify both of them, since their acts and objects are so very distinct, as will appear by what follows.

The object of benevolence, is a thing or person fit to receive good from me: The object of complacence is a thing or person fit to do me good, or to give me pleasure.

Benevolence is an inclination or propensity to seek the happiness or welfare of any being: Complacence is the derivation of some degree of happiness to one's self from any being.* Complacence is a passion, that terminates always finally in one's self, to make one's self easy and pleased, though another thing or person may be the object of it: Benevolence always terminates in that which is the object of it, in order to make that object easy and happy, whether it be ourselves or our neighbours.

Benevolence or good-will therefore chiefly and most properly has some sensible being for the object of it, as man or some other animal: But we take complacence or delight in garments, flowers, houses, herbs, meats, drinks, books, conversation, or any thing that pleases us, as well as in our animal or intellectual fellow-creatures, or in God our Creator.

Complacence always supposes some present good in the object suited to our desires or

* I desire it may be observed here, and throughout this discourse of the Passions, that I describe them all as they are found in men, and not as they may be, by way of analogy, transferred to pure spirits, or to God himself: For when these human passions are ascribed to God in scripture, or in theological writings, we must a little alter our idea of them, and remove every thing from the divine idea that is frail or imperfect.

delights; benevolence sometimes is laid out upon an object that has no such present good in it, as we can desire or delight in, but only some foundation of future good, or some capacity to be made good or agreeable. A pious man can never love wicked men with the love of complacency or delight; but he may exercise the love of benevolence towards them to pity them, and to wish their recovery. So our Saviour could not love the bloody city of Jerusalem with complacency, because it killed the prophets, and blasphemed God and his Son; but he loved it with benevolence, and wept over it some tears of compassion.

There may be, and there are a thousand objects of benevolence or good-will, in which we have no complacence or present delight. God, and angels and good men exercise benevolence towards sinners, in whom they have no complacency: But there can hardly be any person, or any sensible being, in which we take delight, but we have a good-will to it, and wish its welfare.

Thus, though benevolence and complacence greatly differ in their nature, yet often meeting and centering in the same object, the word love is applied to signify both, and too often without a just distinction.

Having premised all these things, let us proceed to discourse of the love of benevolence or good-will, and its contrary, malevolence or ill-will, and to distinguish them into their several kinds.

Benevolence consists in a hearty concern for the welfare of any sensible being, or a propensity to do good to it. In a large sense indeed the word may be applied to that respect which we sometimes shew to inanimate beings, which are not supposed to be sensible. If we see the fine garden at Kensington, or the noble paintings of Raphael at Hampton-court, we wish them a long continuance in their beauty, and that no rude hand may ever destroy them. But this benevolence or love of good-will, is more properly exercised toward intelligent or sensible creatures only.

Though every man in reality bears good-will or benevolence toward himself, yet the word benevolence generally means the good-will or love we bear to another. If the being which is beloved be accounted inferior to the lover, it is called the love of simple benevolence, or good-will, without any other name; so a master may love his servant. If the beloved object be esteemed equal to the lover, there is generally some mutual complacency or delight mingled with it, and it gains the name of friendship; so one friend loves another. If the object be superior, then this love of good-will is joined with esteem, and it is termed honour and respect; so a servant loves his master. But if God himself be the object of it, there ought to be the highest esteem, as well as the greatest degree of complacency joined with it; and thus love grows up into devotion. Though it must be confessed, the word devotion has been sometimes used also with regard to one's country, one's religion, or one's prince, as well as to one's God.

This love of benevolence or good-will, while it wishes well to the objects of it, does oftentimes dispose us to think well of them too, which is called charity, or a charitable opinion. It inclines us to beneloquence, or speaking well of them; to civility, or speaking kindly to them; to humanity or beneficence, that is, treating them well, or doing good to them, according to the wants of the one, and the prudence and capacity of the other. This good-will generally discovers itself in a pleasing countenance, a soft and smiling air, affability of speech, gentleness of behaviour, and a hand extended to invite or relieve the oppressed and the miserable.

The love of friendship does, as it were, unite itself to the object; it produces a communion of benefits, and causes a mutual communication of good offices between the lover and the person beloved. The love to superiors, which is called honour, respect, and veneration, generally carries with it subjection to the object beloved, and makes us use our utmost endeavours to observe, and please the person beloved, by submission, and by obedience.

Devotion to God, which is the highest love, obliges us to perform all proper acts of adoration or worship towards himself, as well as to obey him in all other things which relate to ourselves, or to our fellow-creatures. This endeavour to please and serve our superiors, whom we love, when it rises high, is called zeal, whether it regard God or a creature. We shew our zeal for our king or our country, as well as for our God.

Yet we may observe also, that zeal is sometimes manifested, for some particular notions or practices; not only where God or our superiors are interested, but wherein our own opinions, or humours, or inclinations, are chiefly concerned, or the opinion of some sect, or party, to which we are attached.

If the object of the love of benevolence be in miserable or mournful circumstances, it is then usually styled pity and compassion: And this is one of the tenderest affections which belong to human nature. If the miserable object be inferior, our inclination to help and relieve it, is called mercy and charity; and if the object be poor, it is called bounty and liberality.

If the object of the love of friendship be in misery, it gains the name of sympathy, whereby the lover expresses an inward sense and fellow-feeling of the pains and sorrows which his friends sustain: Though perhaps, this might as well be brought in under the passion of sorrow, unless we extend the word sympathy to signify our communion in all the joys and sorrows, and all the concerns of our friends.

Now let us consider how malevolence or ill-will manifests itself. It implies in it a desire of some evil to fall upon the hated object: It discovers itself in frowns and lowering countenance, in uncharitableness, in evil sentiments, hard speeches to or of its object, in cursing and reviling, and doing mischief, either with open violence or secret spite, as far as there is power. Whether the hated object be superior, inferior, or equal, it may keep the same name, and be called ill-will: If it extend to parents, masters and good magistrates, it becomes a spirit of rebellion: If it arise against God, it grows up to horrid impiety.

If our ill-will or hatred express itself particularly toward an object, considered merely in mournful and miserable circumstances, it is then called cruelty and inhumanity, or hard-heartedness. This evil temper inclines persons to insult their fellow-creatures under their miseries, instead of pitying and relieving them.

If our hatred arise to a high degree, and more especially, if it be without a cause, it is called malignity and malice, which is a most hateful temper in the sight of God and men, and is one of the chief parts of the image of the devil.

SECTION VIII.

COMPLACENCE AND DISPLICENCE.

The third sort of love and hatred are complacence and displicence. If the object be agreeable to me, and suited to give me pleasure, the love which I express to it, is called

the love of complacence or delight; and this extends, as I have hinted before, to trees and fields, to meats and drinks, to business and studies, and to every inanimate thing that is capable of giving me pleasure, as well as to animal or intelligent beings.

The love of complacency or delight has almost an infinite variety of ways to express itself, according to the various objects of it. We gaze upon a pleasing figure, or gay landscape, or beautiful picture, we listen to music or agreeable discourse, we walk long in a fine garden, we smell to flowers, we eat and drink the food that we love, we are intent on delightful studies, we dwell in the company of our friends, and prolong the enjoyment of the thing that pleases us.

If this complacency rise exceeding high towards objects that are inferior, and especially if it exceed the bounds of strict reason, it is called fondness: So children are fond of birds and of their painted toys. Yet here I would take notice once for all, that there is something of this complacency or fondness, which is very innocent and agreeable in the love which God our Creator has ordained between kindred or the nearest relations, and which, in general, is usually called natural affection; but being superadded to the various names of love or benevolence to inferiors, superiors, or equals, renders each of them a sort of distinct species, for which there are scarce any names in our language. Parents love their children with a fondness and tenderness, added to simple benevolence: Children love their parents with fondness and veneration; husbands and wives love each other with a fond and tender friendship; brothers and sisters find also a mutual fondness superadded to the mere love of equals.

This fondness for near relations is manifested by the eyes, by the lips and voice, by the countenance and behaviour, and by a thousand nameless airs of kindness and tenderness, which nature teaches and understands: Nor do we know how to give distinct names to these different sorts of love, unless we borrow them from the Latin name of those relations, and call them parental and filial, conjugal and fraternal love, all which imply benevolence joined with a special kind of complacency.

Perhaps some readers might think it a strange unpardonable omission, if in a treatise of the passions I should be quite silent of that passion which is known to be one of the strongest, that is, the love which a man bears to the woman whom he seeks for a wife: But this has such complications and peculiarities in it, that I leave it to the description of other writers. And as for the lewd and vicious passions, which unjustly assume the same name, they are not fit to be mentioned in this place.

As an agreeable object gives complacency or delight, so where the object is disagreeable, it raises displicence, dislike, or disgust. The word disgust is borrowed from the disagreeableness of food to our palate, and it is most frequently used in such a case, where the object has been once agreeable, but now ceases to be so.

If this displicency rise to a very high degree, we call it abhorrence; and sometimes by a metaphor borrowed from disagreeable food, it is called loathing. This is manifested by some distortions of the countenance, and by shutting the eyes, stopping the ears, turning away the face, or leaving the room.

Where this disagreeableness between the person and the object is something very peculiar in nature, or is wrought into the very constitution of persons by some early accident in life, or by some long and indulged habit, it obtains the name of antipathy: So some persons have a natural antipathy to a cat or a spider, or to some particular sort of food;

and the effects of it are oftentimes very sudden and strong; it occasions sweating, paleness, tremors, fainting, &c.

Most or all of these general passions may be exercised toward ourselves, or toward others. As the love of esteem may have self for the object of it, so may the love of benevolence or good-will, as was hinted before, and so may the love of complacence or delight. We desire the welfare of ourselves, we may be pleased with ourselves, and delight in self. When self is the object, all these are properly called self-love, and all the various kinds and branches of it are called selfish passions.*

The most of these selfish passions are innocent, when kept within proper bounds, and were designed for the service of man, to guard him from evil, and to promote his welfare; yet there is something more generous and honourable when the passions of esteem, benevolence, and complacence, are exercised towards others. A universal love and benevolence, desiring the good of all sensible beings, is a noble character; but still it must be limited by a submission to the will and wisdom of God, who governs all things well, and has not seen fit effectually to secure certain happiness to all his creatures.

SECTION IX.

DESIRE AND AVERSION.

We proceed now to the third rank of passions, which I call derivative, because they spring chiefly from the love of benevolence and complacence, and their contraries. In this rank the first pair that occur are desire and aversion. When we look upon an object as good, and suppose it possible to be attained, our desire goes out toward it, which is a tendency or propensity to obtain some absent or unpossessed good. When we look upon an object as evil, which may possibly come upon us, it awakens an active passion, which we may call aversion or avoidance, and it implies a tendency to escape this evil.

Though these inward principles of desire and aversion seem to have more of the will in them than the other passions; yet if we examine our own hearts, we shall find some strong sensations of the workings of animal nature attending these acts of the will, and therefore they may be properly called passions.

Here I would have it observed, that in our animal natures there are some propensities or desires that arise without any express ideas of the goodness or agreeableness of their object to the mind beforehand, such as hunger, thirst, &c. These we generally call natural appetites. But those desires which arise from our perception or opinion of an object, as good or agreeable, are most properly called passions. Sometimes both these are united.

In the same manner there may be some aversions which arise in nature before our mind expressly conceives the object to be evil or disagreeable; such are some natural

* The ingenious author of "The Nature and Conduct of the Passions," calls those affections which relate to the happiness or unhappiness of other persons public passions or affections, and makes several agreeable and just remarks upon them. Most of the particular and derivative passions may also be public as well as selfish; for they are but the effects of the love of benevolence, or the love of complacence, or their contraries, according to the variety of their objects. We desire good for ourselves or for others: We hope for the happiness of ourselves or our neighbours: We fear, and are solicitous for the welfare of our country, as well as for our own: We rejoice in public prosperity, and mourn over public distress.

antipathies, which seem to be seated or fixed in the very flesh, or blood, or mere animal: So the sudden disorders of body which some persons feel at the sight or scent of a cat, or cheese, or at the approach of a toad or spider, &c. to which I may add the swift efforts of nature to avoid sudden and frightful occurrences, as thunder, lightning, &c. upon the very first sight or sound of them. I know not any single name we have for these sudden natural aversions; they are usually mingled with the passions, and not distinguished from them. But those aversions only are, in the most proper sense, called passions, which arise first from the mind, considering the object as evil.

If our desire to do or receive good be not violent, it is called a simple inclination or propensity: When it rises high, it is termed longing. When any object raises our aversion to a great degree, it is usually named loathing or abhorrence, which is a species of displicency, as before. If we are constrained by superior force or excessive persuasion, to do or suffer evil of any kind contrary to our inclinations, this awakens such a sort of aversion as we call reluctance or regret; though regret sometimes includes sorrow and repentance.

It may be just worth mentioning here, that when our desire sets our active powers at work to obtain the very same good, or the same sort of good, which another desires and seeks, it is called emulation. This is oftentimes a noble principle of virtue, and is far from that base and mischievous passion of envy, which has been too often confounded with it, or not sufficiently distinguished.

As our will to obtain some absent good joined with certain animal commotions, is called desire; so this desire reacheth also to things which apear necessary, as means to obtain this absent good: And in the same manner our aversion, hope, fear, joy, and sorrow, reach to all those things which appear necessary, as means to obtain the good, or to avoid the evil, as well as to the good or evil themselves. If a man knowingly and sincerely desires to obtain heaven, and avoid hell, he will consequently desire and delight in proper instructions, divine helps, religious duties, christian conversation, &c. and he will have an aversion to sin, temptation, folly and vanity.

There are several objects of desire in this world, and especially if the desire be immoderate, which give a distinct name to the passion itself. Desire of the pleasures of sense is called sensuality: Desire of honour, power and authority among men, is called ambition: Desire of riches has been called covetousness: Desire of knowledge, truth, peace, holiness, and heaven, have no proper names made for them, or affixed to them, that I know of.

The desire of honour, power, and riches, are usually counted vices, when they rise high, and especially when they are only confined to selfish ends and designs: But when they have a design of public good, they may be virtuous and unblameable; for one may desire riches, honour, or power, with a sincere design to do more service to God and man.

SECTION X.

HOPE AND FEAR.

The second set of passions which arise from love and hatred, are hope and fear. As the absent good which is proposed to us, when it is merely possible or attainable, raises

our desire, so, as far as there is any prospect of its being obtained, it awakens our hope: But so far as the attainment of it is difficult or unlikely, it excites our fear. Here note, that the passions of fear and hope refer chiefly to such absent good as is not entirely in our own power, but depends in some measure on something without ourselves; for if it be entirely within our power, why do we not seize and possess it? why do we hope or fear about it? Note further, that fear and hope do mutually and reciprocally gain the ascendancy over each other, as the attainment of the good which we pursue appears more or less probable.

As the acquisition of good, so the avoidance of evil awakens our fear and hope in the same manner: If we may possibly escape it, there is hope; but if we may possibly suffer it, there is fear. These also reciprocally rise and sink, according to the probability of the absent evil coming upon us. In this changeable state, fear and hope are not utterly excluded, when the good or evil is present with us; for even when we possess good, we may hope to preserve it, and fear to lose it: And when evil is come upon us, we may fear its continuance, or hope for its removal.

Our fears and hopes arise according to our prospects and dangers of the future.

When our hope rises to the highest degree, it is called confidence or security; we are as it were sure of possessing the good we desire: As on the other hand, when our fear rises highest, and there is little hope left, it turns into despondency; and when all hope is banished, it becomes despair.

When our fear is very active and busy in forc-thought about the evil feared, it is called anxiety and solicitude: When we are afraid lest some other person should prevent our possession or enjoyment of the good desired, it awakens in us suspicion and jealousy, which are very busy and troublesome passions, and discover themselves by a perpetual uneasy watchfulness, and a degree of displicence and ill-will toward the objects of them.

If the enjoyment of the good desired depends pretty much on ourselves, and on our own conduct, and we are at a loss what means to make use of to obtain it, then our hope is attended with suspense or fluctuation of the mind. When this is overcome, the mind feels itself in a state of resolution and courage. The first gives a perplexity of soul, the last gives freedom.

If fear be mingled with surprize, or arise on a sudden to any violent degree, it gains the name of terror and consternation. The highest degree of aversion and fear united is called horror. When fear settles into a habit, it maintains a most dreadful and insupportable tyranny over the mind, and makes life itself a burden.

Desire and hope manifest themselves by an eager stretching out the arms to receive the good desired; by an intent fixation of the eye on the person from whom we expect it; by breathing and panting after the object of our desires; by a cheerful countenance, and the joys of hope intermingled with earnest wishes, and an impatience of possession.

Fear shews itself by paleness of the cheek, sinking of the spirits, trembling of the limbs, hurry and confusion of the mind and thoughts, agonies of nature and fainting. Many a person has died with fear. Sometimes it rouses all nature to exert itself in speedy flight, or other methods, to avoid the approaching evil; sudden terror has performed some almost incredibles of this kind. There is nothing, says a late writer, more quick and apprehensive than fear, nor any passion to which our powers pay a more speedy obedience; for it is in pursuance of that great law of nature, self-preservation.

As by lively hope we do in some measure rejoice in the good before we possess it; so by sinking fears we do, as it were, suffer the evil before it comes upon us: And by this means many times our hopes and fears please and pain us more than the good or evil when they are present with us.

SECTION XI.

OF JOY AND SORROW.

Joy and sorrow are the third set of passions derived from love and hatred. When the good we desire is obtained and secured, our fear and hope cease, and are turned into joy: Or if the evil which we would avoid be actually come upon us, all our former hopes and fears about it sink into present grief or sorrow.

Sorrow and joy do properly belong to the mind of man; sensual pain and pleasure to the animal nature united to it: Yet in a way of metaphor or resemblance, as grief is the pain of the mind, so joy may be called the pleasure of the mind. When our joy is moderate, it is gladness: Moderate grief is called trouble or uneasiness of mind.

When these passions are raised on a sudden, and to the highest degree, joy becomes exultation or transport, and grief is distress and anguish of mind; and especially if overwhelming fear of farther evil attend it, it is horror and extreme misery.

Contentment has a sort of gladness of heart belonging to it, when we limit our desires by our possessions: But when our desires are raised high, and yet accomplished, this is called satisfaction.

When our joy is derived from some comical occasion or amusement, it is mirth; this is manifested by laughter: If it rise from some considerable opposition, that is vanquished in the pursuit of the good we desire, it gains the honourable name of triumph.

When joy has so often or so long possessed the mind, that it is settled into a temper, we call it cheerfulness or gaiety of heart: But if sorrow affect the constitution of the body, and the temper of the mind in this manner, it is generally joined with habitual fear, and it is named dejection, or heaviness of spirit, or melancholy. This is well described, a sinking sadness oppressing the whole man.

Good and evil, which are past or future, as well as what is present, will raise some degrees of joy and sorrow, but in a little different manner. Evil foreseen gives us sorrow joined with fear; good foreseen raises the joy of hope. And sometimes the joys and sorrows which arise from hope and fear of good or evil to come, are greater than those which we feel from the good or evil when it is come, as was intimated before.

In like manner, the recollection of former joy gives us some pleasure that we once possessed it, mingled with pain and grief that it is vanished and gone. So also the remembrance of former sorrows has some bitterness in it, while it revives them upon the mind; but it is matter of joy to think they are finished, and shall not return.

When we rejoice upon the account of any good which others obtain, it may be called congratulation, or sympathy of joy; and when we grieve upon the account of evil which others endure, it is pity and sympathy of sorrow: And this sometimes reaches even to

objects where there is no hope of relief. Congratulation is benevolence and joy united; as benevolence and sorrow united grow into pity or compassion.*

But there is a wicked passion called envy, which stands in direct opposition to pity and congratulation. Envy takes pleasure in seeing others made unhappy; and it grieves and is uneasy that others should enjoy prosperity and peace. It is founded on ill-will, and appears in joy or sorrow mixed with malice. It generally wears a sour and uneasy countenance, though sometimes it puts on a malignant joy. Sometimes it awakens a spiteful sneer, and disposes to biting jests. It is a most hateful passion or temper of mind, for it is not only odious to all others, but it wastes the very life, and destroys the comfort of him that carries it in his bosom.

Vexation and fretfulness is an active, busy, and galling sort of sorrow, that hangs about the spirit, teazes it, and makes it restless, and it is generally joined with anger against ourselves or others. But it is time now to enumerate some of the common and natural attendants of joy and sorrow.

The natural signs of joy are vivacity of the spirits, a sparkling eye, a florid and smiling countenance, a raised head, an erect posture of body, a pleasant freedom of speech, and sometimes it inclines the lips to harmony and a song; and sometimes also it raises the voice to shouting, and the person exults or leaps for great gladness of heart. Upon some tender occasions, love and joy join together, and produce tears.

The symptoms and effects of sorrow are closing and heavy eyelids, a dead paleness on the cheeks and lips, a languid and gloomy countenance, eyes flowing with tears, or dim and wasted with weeping, an affectation of solitude, sitting in darkness and silence, or lying on the ground in an abject posture, an aversion to business, a cold indifference to every pleasure, a neglect of food and dress, of ornaments and delights, and a wasting of life, and the tiresome hours of it in sighs, and groans, and bitter complaints. Heretofore, among the Jews, as well as some other nations, deep sorrow was manifested by plucking off the hair of the head and beard, by tearing the garments, by putting on sackcloth, and sitting in ashes.

From natural joy and sorrow I am led to other kinds of this pair of passions, which may be called moral joy and sorrow.† Moral joy is a self-approbation, or a complacency in self on the account of good actions done by us. This is called peace and serenity of conscience; if the action be honourable, and the joy rise high, it may be called glory.

Moral sorrow is the inward disapprobation or reproof of our own consciences, on the account of some evil action we have been guilty of. It is a displicence with ourselves, and an inward remorse, repentance or trouble of mind for our own ill conduct; and when it rises high, it is a terrible passion indeed, and is called the anguish of conscience.

As moral joy or self-approbation is expressed by a serene and peaceful countenance, a calm pleasure on the face, and universal ease; so this moral sorrow or remorse rises so high sometimes, as not only to vent itself in sighs and tears, but in tearing the hair, in

* It has been observed by an ingenious writer, Dr. Butler, now bishop of Durham, in his sermons, that congratulation is rather an outward expression of the inward pleasure arising from another's happiness, than the inward sensation of that pleasure: And thus it rather answers to condolence than to compassion: But that, strictly speaking, there is, in his opinion, no one single word or name for this passion of rejoicing in the good of others. Yet since congratulation comes nearest to this idea, I venture to use that word.

† Other passions which have virtue and vice for their objects, may be called moral also; but I have omitted them, because they have not distinct names.

beating the breast, in hollow haggard eyes, in hideous wailings, self-cursings, and gnawing one's flesh; especially when it is joined with despair of pardon or relief, and it sometimes ends in self-murder.

As inward sensations of glory frequently attend moral joy, so shame is a frequent concomitant of this moral sorrow, or it may be called one species of it; for as all moral sorrow arises from a consciousness of having done some evil action, so shame arises from a consciousness of having done an action which is dishonourable, contrary to the dignity of our nature, or to our good character in the esteem of God or men. It is manifested by avoiding company, by downcast eyes, by hiding the face, or by blushing: When it arises high, it is called confusion of face and soul, for it puts all nature into a sort of tumult and confusion. Shame and sorrow should always join in true repentance for sin, whether against God, or against our neighbour.

Let it be noted also, that if any thing that is counted dishonourable among men be charged upon us, or imputed to us, though we are innocent, it excites shame: And one may feel the passion of shame also arising, if any thing dishonourable be imputed to, or done by our parents, or kindred, or friends, or country, or sect, or party, as well as by ourselves.

There is another passion something akin to this, which is also called shame, or bashfulness, or modesty, and which appears in blushes. It is a very honourable and becoming passion, which arises upon the name or mention of any thing dishonourable, though not imputed to us, or to any that belong to us: It is raised also by the appearance or practice of any thing lewd or scandalous in company: It is a kind of sorrow mingled with displicence and aversion to the thing which is spoken of, or practised: It is the natural guard of innocence and honour, especially in young people; and the blush is called the colour of virtue.

There is also a sort of bashfulness, or shamefacedness, which young people are often exposed to when they come into strange company, when they are in the presence of their superiors, or when they are called to appear or act in public, which arises from self-diffidence, and from want of courage. This appears in blushing, or sometimes in paleness, or trembling and confusion, and brings a stop on the voice, or frequent hesitation in speech. When it arises to such a degree, it ought to be overcome, lest it prevent all public usefulness for want of a becoming assurance.

I may here take notice of one thing, wherein all the affections, which go under the appellation of shame, agree, and that is, that they are designed by nature, in their moderate use, to prevent shameful and dishonourable actions.

SECTION XII.

GRATITUDE AND ANGER.

I come now to the last set of passions, derived from love and hatred, and these are anger and gratitude. I confess, anger is usually named without any opposite: But I think, gratitude stands in a proper opposition to it, as will appear immediately.

Both these have a reference to such objects as are supposed to act with some degree of free-will or voluntariness; for we are not said to be angry with the stone or the sword

that bruises or wounds us, nor can we properly be grateful to the ointment which heals our wound.

Anger is generally made up of displicency, and some degree of malevolence, or desire that the object of it should suffer some inconvenience: For if any person seeks to hinder or prevent us from obtaining the good we desire, if he seeks to dispossess us of the good we enjoy, or endeavours to bring upon us the evil we would avoid, we are displeased with him, and we would have some evil inflicted upon him; this we call anger or resentment. And this is sometimes eminently called passion, as I have intimated in the beginning of this treatise.

When I describe anger, as including some degree of malevolence in it, this does not always mean the wishing or designing of real or lasting mischief to the offending party; for parents are angry with their children whom they love fondly, and wish them no other hurt but some present pain, to amend and cure their folly.

If anger rise to a very high degree, it is wrath, fury, and rage; and it is called a short madness, because some persons, under the violent influence of this passion, fling about every thing that comes in their way, and appear for a time, as though they were void of reason: And some persons, by an excessive indulgence of it, have grown distracted.

If anger arising on some particular occasion, continue so long as to be fixed and rooted in the heart, and refuse all accommodation or reconciliation, it is sometimes called rancour, and the attendant or effect of it is spite. When anger or resentment are perpetually ready to arise on every little occasion, this is a settled temper rather than a passion, and it has the name of peevishness, or a froward humour.

If the object of our anger be beneath us, so that we count it an indignity to suffer any thing from such a person, it gains the name of indignation. We are also fired with indignation against flagrant impiety toward God, or vile oppression and cruelty toward men, because these objects are highly unworthy of such impious, or such cruel treatment.

All anger is by no means sinful; it was made for self-defence, and it has many times a design to reclaim and recover the offender from sin and danger: But when it grows so violent against any person, as plainly exceeds all the rules of private self-defence, and evidently seeks and contrives to bring evil upon another, without any design of benefit to the offender, it is properly termed revenge or vengeance. This is always criminal in a private person: The laws of christianity forbid it utterly. And even when a public ruler puts the vengeance of the law in excution, and takes away the life of a malefactor, for the good of the rest of the world, it should be done without the passion of private anger; he should rather exercise his own pity to the offender, even when he condemns him to die, and makes him a sacrifice to the public vengeance.

Anger, when rising, is prevented by a spirit of meekness and forbearance, and when raised, it is subdued by a spirit of forgiveness. Gratitude seems to stand in direct opposition to anger; for it is made up of complacence and benevolence upon the occasion of good received from another.

When a person has conferred any benefit upon us, and we have an inclination upon that account to confer some benefit upon him, we call this gratitude. The reverse of this is ingratitude; which is no passion, but a temper which inclines persons to neglect former benefits received, and make no acknowledgments or due returns of kindness. When it rises very high, it returns evil for good, which is a most hateful and criminal

temper and conduct. Yet this has no distinct name, for the languages of men have not yet found a harder name than ungrateful.

Gratitude is a gentle principle, and makes little commotion in nature, besides a sensible pleasure when our benefactor is happy; and it excites our desires, contrivances, and active endeavours to make him so. Anger is a more tumultuous passion, and renders itself generally visible by many outward symptoms. Sometimes it looks red and fiery, sometimes pale and wan: It flames or scowls in the eyes; it wrinkles the brow into thick frowns; it enlarges the nostrils and makes them heave; it fills the tongue with short spiteful words, or noisy threatenings; and the hand with weapons of violence to assault the offender; and sometimes it causes a tremor through all the limbs.

But here it may be proper to take notice of two sorts of anger and resentment, which are wont to arise in persons of different tempers and complexions, and which have some different symptoms and effects.

The first is sudden and vehement; it discovers itself in a moment; it flushes in the face; it sparkles in the eyes; it awakens the tongue to sharp reproaches, and the hand to sudden revenge. This may be found in persons that have much love and goodness in their temper; and this violent resentment is much sooner appeased, the angry person is more easily reconciled to the offender and ashamed of his own passion.

The second sort of anger is not so violent in its rise. Sometimes it spreads a paleness over the countenance; it is silent and sullen, and the angry person goes on from day to day with a gloomy aspect, and a sour and uneasy carriage, averse to speak to the offender, unless it be now and then a word or two of a dark and spiteful meaning: The vicious passion dwells upon the soul, and frets and preys upon the spirits: It inclines the tongue to teaze the offender with a repetition of his crime in a sly manner, upon certain seasons and occurrences, and that for weeks and months after the offence, and sometimes for years. This sort of wrath sometimes grows up into a settled malice and rancour, and is ever contriving revenge and mischief. May divine grace form my heart in a better mould, and deliver me from this vile temper and conduct!

Thus I have briefly run through the passions, describing in a few words their nature and combinations, their usual appearances and effects. There are many other combined passions besides those which I have mentioned; for the motions of the mind, and the ferments of the blood and juices in man are exceeding swift, and capable of almost infinite varieties. The short view which I have given, may enable some readers to form a better judgment of human nature, and its various powers and infirmities: And by a wise inspection into their own hearts, and an observation of what passes there, as well as by converse with the world, they may much further improve themselves in the knowledge of mankind, and learn their own interest and their duty.

SECTION XIII.

SEVERAL THINGS THAT DISPOSE US TO DIFFERENT PASSIONS.

I have intimated in the third section, that there are several things that belong to the nature and the life of man, which dispose the heart in general to more of these pathetic commotions of nature, or incline it to particular passions; I come now to give a more particular detail what those things are.

The natural constitution or complexion, whether sanguine or melancholy, choleric or phlegmatic, whether moist or dry, sprightly or dull, hot or cold, gives a greater or less disposition to passion in general, as well as to some particular passions of the heart. Those of a sanguine complexion are most easily susceptive of most of these commotions of nature; and especially the gayer and bolder passions, the sprightly, the pleasing and benevolent, such as love and joy: Whereas the melancholy temper disposes to grief, and fear, and consternation; the choleric to wrath and revenge.

The different ages of men have their different passions suited to them. Gaiety and gladness of heart, love, and hope, and courage, belong to youth, because of the firmness of their nerves, and vigour of their spirits, which are easily raised but not soon depressed. Youth also is more subject to wonder, because they have not seen so much of the world, and there are more things appear new to them. Old age is much more liable to fears and despondencies, and long and obstinate sorrow; childhood to sudden changes of grief and joy.

The seasons of the year, the different times of the day, morning, noon and night, the diversity of weather, whether cloudy, rainy, windy, or shining, have great power upon these animal bodies of ours to dispose us to different passions. Long dark nights and cloudy days in the winter season, give us a tendency to gloominess of thought, fear and sorrow; rainy weather hangs heavy on the head and heart: Whereas the returning spring and sunshine dispose the brutal creation as well as man to all the gayer passions, or at least to an imitation of them.

The different state of the body, as to sickness or health, ease or pain, strength or weakness, and especially in disorders of the nervous kind, have great influence on the several affections of the mind. The indispositions of this flesh of ours subject us too often to the fearful, the sorrowful and the peevish passions. Courage, and patience, and benevolence are impaired by long illness; but the very same persons throw off these evil dispositions, and revive into the more pleasing humours and airs, when health returns.

Different employments, and different conditions of life, beget in us a tendency to our different passions. Those who are exalted above others in their daily stations, and especially if they have to do with many persons under them, and in many affairs, are too often tempted to the haughty, the morose, the surly, and the more unfriendly ruffles and disturbances of nature, unless they watch against them with daily care. The commanders in armies and navies, the governors of workhouses, the masters of public schools, or those who have a great number of servants under them, and a multitude of cares and concerns in human life, should continually set a guard upon themselves, lest they get a habit of affected superiority, pride and vanity of mind, of fretfulness, impatience and criminal anger.

There are many other things which might be mentioned as disposing the soul and body to special passions; as company or solitude, plenteous circumstances or poverty, hard labour or diversion, and more particularly music of the various strains; all these have power to raise or depress the various passions of the heart. There is also a contagion in some of the passions, whereby one person infects his neighbour with them: Fear, sorrow, love, joy, anger, jealousy, are often thus propagated.

Different places and habitations, city or country, thicker or finer air, a colder or a warmer climate, hunger or fulness, different diet, &c. dispose the nature of man to different

affections. The various nations, the Scots, the Welsh, the English, the French, the Spaniards and Germans, have their particular characters and tempers assigned to them by various writers, and are accordingly more or less susceptive of different passions. A man is pleasant and easy when at leisure in the fields, who is perhaps ever fretful in the midst of the businesses and cares of the city. Anger, peevishness, and the surly humour is too often ready to prevail upon some persons, when they are hungry and empty; but a good dinner allays the unpleasing commotions of the heart, and they are all benevolence and joy.

Among these things, it is remarkable, that diseases of the nervous kind will give so strong a disposition to particular passions, in the animal part of our nature, that they have sometimes actually raised them, or at least the various symptoms of them, without any particular object or thought. Persons under the power of these disorders have been sometimes carried almost mechanically into a fit of excessive laughter, and sometimes have been drowned in a flood of grief and tears, and both without any apparent occasion.

SECTION XIV.

THE GENERAL DESIGN AND USE OF THE PASSIONS.

While we inhabit this sensible world, and are united to flesh, the passions were given us to assist the feeble influences of our reason in the practice of duty, for our own and our neighbour's good. Reason is too often called away from a due attention to a present necessary idea by many sensible objects: But passion serves to fix the attention. Reason is too slow, and too weak, to excite a sudden and vigorous activity in many cases; but passion is sudden and strong for this purpose. The general uses of the passions may be comprehended in these five notes or remarks:

I. Since the passions are certain principles or powers in human nature, which include in them some commotions of flesh and blood, as well as some operations of the mind, we may reasonably suppose, that the design of our Creator in working them into our original constitution, was for the service both of our minds and our bodies: Though it must be confessed in our fallen and degenerate state, they often prove our snares and our torments.

1. They were designed for the service of the body, because they awaken not only all the animal powers, but the thoughts and contrivances of the mind, to prevent or escape whatsoever is hurtful to the body, and to procure what is pleasant and useful for its support or safety, that is, in more compendious language, to obtain good or avoid evil.

While our body is in such a feeble state, surrounded with dangers, and liable to so many troublesome accidents, disorders, and death, God has not only furnished us with the sensations of pleasure and pain, to give us speedy notice of what hurts or relieves the body, and with appetites for the supply of our natural wants, but he has also given us the passions of joy and sorrow, of desire and aversion, &c. to assist in this work, that the body may be better provided with what is necessary to its health and life, and may be better guarded against the danger of wounds and bruises, distempers and death. Mere reason would not awaken us to avoid danger so speedily as the passion of fear, nor would it rouse us to self-defence with such sudden and vigorous efforts as anger does. I shall say no more of their use relating to the body.

2. The passions may be made also of considerable service to the mind, while it dwells in this embodied state: For though they do not inform us what is good for the soul, and what is evil; yet when reason has judged what is evil and what is good, the passions are ready to lend their vigorous assistance to avoid or pursue. They have been represented as the wings of the soul to pursue our true happiness and to escape misery; and it is of vast importance to have these wings directed aright. The passions keep all the natural spirits and the thoughts of the mind strongly intent upon those objects which excite them, and with a sudden call they awaken and excite all the powers of nature to act agreeably to them.

If the object be uncommon, and has any thing in it rare and wonderful, the passion of admiration fixes the mind to consider it with strong attention, and hereby sometimes we may be let further into the knowledge of it.

If the object appear to be good, the passion of love determines the mind to pursue it with vigour; and if it be evil, the passion of hatred excites us to use our utmost skill and force to avoid it; and this it does not only in the things of flesh and sense which relate to this bodily life, but in things of a spiritual nature, and of future and eternal concern.

II. The painful passions have their use in human life, as well as the pleasant ones. It is granted indeed, that there are some passions, which taken together with their special objects and degrees, have obtained peculiar names, and may be properly called vicious and immoral*; and these are of no use, but ought to be abolished and rooted out; such are pride, malice, envy, revenge: These could never belong to a man in a state of innocence. There are other passions, such as fear, shame, sorrow, and anger, which are uneasy and painful: And how far these might be found among innocent men, I will not now stand to enquire. Yet while we dwell in this fallen and mortal state, beset with so many evils, dangers, enemies, and temptations on every side, these painful affections will be found necessary to our welfare in this life, and to our preparation for a better.

While we live amongst numerous dangers, fear is a very necessary principle to keep us always upon our guard: While we abide in a world where there are so many of our fellow-creatures ready to oppress and injure us, the great Author of our beings saw it proper to mix up anger and resentment with our constitution, that we might be awakened to defend ourselves against injury, and make oppressors fear to assault us. While we are ready to expose ourselves to many grievances and distresses by our own folly, God has ordained sorrow to attend all those distresses, and shame to attend some of them; partly that we might be awakened to renounce those follies by a shameful and painful sense of the effects of them, and partly that under every affliction we might be excited with more earnestness to seek to God and man for relief. Sorrow abases our pride and vanity, it tames the wildness of our spirits, brings us to think and reflect a little, it softens the heart, and makes it impressible, and ready to receive instruction.

* There is no passion properly so called, and considered in itself as belonging to man, which is absolutely sinful in the abstracted nature of it; all the works of God are good; but if passion be let loose on an improper object, or in an improper time or degree, or for too long a continuance, then it becomes criminal, and obtains sometimes a distinct name. Esteem placed upon self as the object, and in an unreasonable degree, becomes pride. Anger prolonged into a settled temper, often turns into malice, &c. or if it be mingled with vices of the will, it becomes sinful also.

I add yet further, while we are in a state of probation for eternity, and heaven and hell are set before us, fear is necessary as well as hope, to keep us from sinful practices. While we have the seeds of sin dwelling in us, and are so often guilty of the commission of it, sorrow, shame, and repentance, are very proper and appointed means towards our recovery to divine favour, and to renewed holiness: And it is very reasonable that we should be displeased and angry with ourselves, when we have yielded to sin, as well as angry with others who have tempted us to do it; that so our trespasses may be made bitter and grievous to us on all sides, and to those who seduced us; and that thereby we might be better secured from the repetition of sinful practices, and the influence of new temptations.

III. Let it be observed also, that as fear, and anger, and sorrow, and other troublesome passions are designed to secure us from evil; so the more pleasing affections of nature, such as hope, and love, and joy, may be usefully indulged; for they do not only make us active and vigorous in the pursuit of what appears good, but they render our life more comfortable, and make the troubles of it more tolerable by their agreeable mixture; they cheer our drooping spirits, and support nature from sinking. This life without them would be a listless dulness or a heavy burden. They have also a happy tendency to make many of the duties of the civil life and religion easy and delightful, and thereby allure us to the practice of them. Both the pleasant and the painful passions may be happily engaged in the interests of God and religion, as will appear in "The Discourses of the Love of God, and the Use and Abuse of the Passions in Religion."

IV. The passions are designed not only to subserve our own welfare both of soul and body, but the great Author of our nature intended them also for the benefit of our fellow-creatures. Man must not be considered merely as a single creature fitted with powers to seek his own safety and happiness; but he is designed by his Maker for a sociable creature, and must do good to his fellows.

With this view there are some affections wrought in the nature of man, which plainly refer to the welfare of his neighbour, as there are others that refer to his own. These may be called social passions, as the others are called selfish. There is a natural principle of benevolence in man, to man, where it is not overpowered by vicious principles or habits, or obstructed by some present superior influence of self-love: There is such a principle in us as compassion or pity to those that are miserable, or sympathy with those that suffer: There are the natural domestic affections as well as names of a husband, wife, father, mother, son, daughter, brother, and sister, &c. Now the very design of these affections is to do good to our fellow-creatures: And most or all these good-natured and social principles in mankind have their proper desires and aversions, hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, and resentments attending them, as well as the selfish passions which seek only our own good.

And indeed as mankind are brought into the world, according to the order of nature, they become social creatures as it were from their very birth. They are born and grow up into numerous unions, relations and bonds of society, both natural, civil and religious, and they have perpetual need of each other's assistance, and naturally seek it. It was therefore wisely ordered by the God of nature, that there should be some principles wrought in us of the affectionate kind, in order to make our mutual services to each other easy and delightful, and to awaken us to the vigorous and unwearied practice of those duties towards our fellow-creatures, for which perhaps reason and conscience might have too feeble influence in our present state.

V. Though the affections have much to do in the active parts of human life, yet they have very little to do in matters of speculation and judgment, as will appear immediately by what follows.

Since it is the very nature of our passions to fix all our natural powers with the strongest attention to the object of them; and particularly to those properties that raised them, they do generally increase the first apprehension we had of the object, whether it be true or false, and confirm the first judgment we passed upon it, whether we apprehend the object to be good or evil. It is evident that fear, anger, hatred, sorrow, all tend to impress our minds more powerfully with a sense of the evil contained in the object, and to represent it in its worst colours: And in the same manner hope, love, desire, delight, and joy, persuade us more powerfully that the object of them is good, and rather add new excellencies to it. Even the passion of admiration sometimes makes us think the object of it, to be more strange and more considerable than really it is: And all the passions derived from love or hatred tend to represent the good or evil of the object to be greater and more important than really it is; I mean chiefly in temporal things.

Hence it follows, with great evidence, that the passions are not fit to be our guides in determining truth and falsehood; they were never given us to search out the true nature of things, or to judge concerning their qualities, or the degree of them. For in order to judge aright, we must consider with an impartial view, all the properties and circumstances of any object, and attend to all the reasonings that belong to it, both on one side and on the other; whereas every passion confines our thoughts only to one side of the question. It is the nature of passion to fix our minds only on those properties, qualities, and circumstances that first raised it, and to make them appear more considerable; and indeed it suffers us not to attend with impartiality to any thing else. Passion generally tends to make us blind and deaf to all circumstances and reasonings, but those which confirm itself.

Let us ask ourselves when we have been angry on a sudden, have we not, during the reign of that passion, supposed the offence to be much more heinous than our calm reason has judged after the fit of passion was over? When our fears have been raised high, has not the danger appeared more formidable than really it was? When Jonah the prophet was under the power of passion, he said *he did well to be angry*, even with God himself; *Jonah* iv. 9. a false and shameful saying! When David was in a continual fright and fear of death under the persecutions of Saul, he said *all men are liars*, even Samuel, who promised him the kingdom by inspiration: But his faith afterward confuted his fears; *Psalm* cxvi. 11. Fear makes a molehill look like a mountain; but courage and hope turn a mountain into a molehill. Joy shortens the time, so that a day seems but an hour or two: Sorrow makes every hour seem tedious as a day. But all these are false ideas, or rather false judgments.

Here we find then how it comes to pass, that those who follow the dictates of their passions, scarce ever judge right, or reason well; for they put themselves under the bias of these powerful commotions of nature, which lean all to one side, and thereby they fall into perpetual prejudices and mistakes.

Conclusion. Upon the whole survey of things, the passions are of admirable and most important use in the life of man, and a christian: For though they were not given to tell us what is good, and what is evil, yet when our reason, upon a calm survey, has passed a just judgment concerning things, whether they are good or evil, the passions, as I before

mentioned, are those lively, warm, and vigorous principles and powers in our nature, which animate us to pursue the good, and avoid the evil; and that with vastly greater speed and diligence than the mere calm and indolent dictates of reason would ever do. By this means when the passions are once set right, they become exceeding serviceable to us, in things that relate to God, and to our neighbour, as well as to ourselves: It is on this account they are so useful to us in affairs of the utmost importance that concern this life, and the life to come.

Hence it follows, that the Stoics were much in the wrong to persuade us to root out and destroy all passions in general, and to nullify if possible, those active and useful powers which the God of nature has planted in us, for excellent purposes, in human life. Stoical apathy is not christian virtue. Reason and religion teach us to regulate and govern our passions wisely, but not to erase and abolish them.

SECTION XV.

OF THE REGULATION AND GOVERNMENT OF THE PASSIONS, WHEREIN IT CONSISTS.

The whole art of regulating the passions, consists in these four things, *viz.* 1. A power to prevent and subdue all those, which taken together with their objects, can be called unlawful. 2. To excite those which are innocent and useful to a just degree on proper occasions. 3. To withhold or suppress them, when they go out towards improper objects. And 4. To moderate them when they rise to an irregular degree, or exceed a proper duration, even when the object is lawful.

But it must be confessed, that with regard to things of this life, and the objects of flesh and sense, our passions, for the most part, want to be suppressed and moderated, rather than to be incited or indulged. Thence it comes to pass that the government of the passions is much more frequently described by the power to moderate and subdue them, than by the art of raising them.

Since the passions are made up of the ferments of the blood, and the commotions of animal nature, as well as the operations of the mind, they do not lie entirely under the command of the will; we cannot stir up and suppress these ferments of animal nature by a sovereign act of volition when we please. But it may be done by the consideration of truth: For as the passions are raised by perceptions of the mind, so we may by degrees raise or suppress the passions, by applying our minds to the perception of those objects, or those truths which are suited to these purposes.

If a soldier is assaulted by an enemy, he cannot suppress his fears, nor raise his courage by a mere act of his will; but when he considers what is his character, and his post, how weak the enemy is, and how much nobler it is to defend himself than to fly, and what honour is gained by victory, and what shame attends cowardice and submission, these truths represented to the mind, disperse his fears, raise his courage, and he resolves upon the fight.

But since there are many ways of regulating these active powers of nature, I shall propose some of the chief of them in this order:

I. I will mention a general rule or two for the regulation of the three primitive passions.

II. Propose some particular truths and rules with which the mind should be ever

furnished, as preservatives against the rise, the excess, or irregularity of some particular passions.

III. Lay down some universal directions, which relate to the passions, and the regulations of them.

SECTION XVI.

GENERAL RULES ABOUT THE THREE PRIMITIVE PASSIONS.

I. LET me mention a general rule or two for the regulation of the three primitive passions.

We have seen in the foregoing pages, that the most general primitive passions are admiration, love, and hatred; and the objects that raise them must appear to us to be either uncommon, or good, or evil.

The way to guard us against excessive admiration, or a foolish gazing and wondering at every thing, is to get a large acquaintance with things, *viz.* to learn the various works of nature, the appearances of providence, the occurrences of human life, and the affairs of mankind, both by observation and diligent reading, and by free and public conversation. When we have attained such a general knowledge, fewer things will appear new, rare, and uncommon; and we shall not be so ready to stare and wonder at every thing, nor be surprized so often as we were when our knowledge was less.

Yet, since admiration or wonder, when well regulated, is a very pleasing passion, we may always find something sufficient and worthy to raise this agreeable sensation, if we will proceed still, and make further searches into the works of God, and continually dive deeper into the philosophy of nature, into the natural history of things, in the heavens, and on the earth; and especially, if we contemplate the nature and perfections of God, the amazing instances of his providence and grace, which he has manifested in his word. Some of these objects will afford matter of eternal wonder and pleasure to men and angels in a future world.

Love and hatred are the next primitive passions; good or evil are their objects: Now the way to secure us from irregular exercises of love or hatred, and all the infinite train of affections that depend upon them, is to form a right judgment of good and evil: The true reason why the multitudes of mankind become so sinful and so miserable, by fixing their passions on improper objects, or by raising them to an excessive degree, is because they are guilty of such perpetual mistakes in their judgment of what is evil, and what is good, as well as about the several degrees of good and evil. We are ever deceiving ourselves by vain shadows and appearances of good: And while trifles and vanities, or sin and mischief, and misery appear in the shape and disguise of good, we awaken our warmest passion in the pursuit of it.

If we see one man with his hopes and his fears, his desires, his joys and solicitudes all engaged about a gaming-table, a mistress, or a place of honour at court, we may be sure these things stand high in his esteem among the ranks of good; while at the same time, he neglects virtue and religion, his closet and his Bible, and all the blessings of the heavenly world. He has none of his passions employed about these things, because among his ideas of good they have but a low rank, or perhaps they are despised, as having no good in them, that is, nothing agreeable to him.

A fluttering beau is ever solicitous about dress and public appearances; an antiquary spends his days among medals and ancient parchments, tombs and inscriptions; a critic wastes his life in correcting letters and syllables, in placing and displacing A's and B's; a virtuoso perhaps, is too much employed among his shells and his fossils, his worms and his butterflies; and an idle tradesman dwells in coffee-houses, feeds upon newspapers, and squanders away his time among the wars, and the treaties of princes, the counsels and the campaigns of Europe, and the ceremonies of ambassadors. All of them have their passions engaged on their several chosen objects, which they call good: Most of these, if moderately pursued according to their just value, or real use in science or in human life, and according to the different stations and conditions of men, have something of good in them, and the pursuit of them would not be culpable: But these men commit a gross mistake when they call them good in so high a degree, as to let the affairs of their family run at random in the pursuit of them, or neglect the more important interests of their souls and eternity. You see how strangely some men judge what is good for them.

Again, among persons that profess religion and mean to be christians, we find some who lay out their thoughts and wishes, their hopes, and fears, and joys, who employ their love, their wrath and hatred, and every passion about some little rites and forms, feasts and fastings, about the distinguishing phrases and opinions of some narrow sect or party, and make these the rules for their conduct toward their neighbours, while faith and honesty, love to God, and general benevolence to man, the devotion of the heart, and holiness of life, are too much forgotten. You may judge hereby what it is they call good in religion, and in what preposterous order they have ranged their ideas, and their value of things.

If we would cure ourselves of these follies, and wisely employ all our passions upon proper objects, and that in a due degree, let us take the utmost care to gain a just estimate of all the objects we converse with, that we may neither overrate nor undervalue them: We must prefer God above creatures, the soul above the body, eternal things above temporal. Let God and religion, Jesus Christ and the gospel, truth and virtue, divine grace and heavenly glory, stand uppermost and hold the highest and best place among all our ideas of good: Let sin and folly, the devil and his temptations, anguish of conscience and hell, be counted the greatest and worst of evils: And let every thing else be ranged in our esteem according to their relation to, or influence upon these best and worst of objects. Suffer nothing that relates merely to this mortal and perishing life, to come in competition with things infinite and eternal.

Remember also, among the affairs of religion to set the necessary truths and duties of it in your esteem above all the unnecessary opinions, the modes, and forms, and appendices of it; and moral laws above positive institutions.

Again, among the things that belong to this world and our present welfare, make a wise distinction between the necessaries of life and the conveniences of it, between the supports of life and the ornaments, between the real blessings of life, and the imaginary ones, between the business of life and the amusements of it, between the duties and the diversions: From your judgment about all these things, at such seasons when you are calm and sedate, and free from the influence of any passion; and according to the rank of worth or goodness in which your unbiassed reason has placed all these things in your esteem, let your actions of life be conducted, and all your passions be regulated thereby.

SECTION XVII.

PRESERVATIVES AGAINST THE IRREGULAR EXERCISE OF SOME PARTICULAR PASSIONS.

II. THE second thing which I propose, in order to regulate the passions, was to exhibit some special truths, and some particular rules, with which the mind should be ever furnished, against the excess or irregularity of particular and dangerous passions. But I shall not set all these truths and the rules in different ranks, since many of the rules are but a consideration of some proper truths.

The particular passions to which our natures are very prone, and which lead us often far astray from virtue, piety, and happiness, are chiefly these, *viz.* pride in ourselves, and scorn of others, malice and envy against our neighbour, excessive love and fondness of particular objects, fear and sorrow, anger and revenge. Some of these are to be prevented or suppressed entirely, *viz.* pride, malice, envy, revenge; others must be governed by the principles of reason and religion, *viz.* fear, anger, sorrow, &c. If we can regulate all these wisely, it will go a great way toward a pious and happy life. And if we would allow ourselves once a year to read over the following sections of this book, which contain rules for the exercise and due government of our passions, perhaps we should not complain of lost labour, nor regret the hours spent in such a review of matters, which ought to be kept in perpetual practice; and which relate to our peace and happiness through the whole course of this life, and our preparation for a better.

SECTION XVIII.

RULES TO SUBDUE PRIDE AND SCORN.

1. THINK often what you were, and what you shall be. Consider what you were. What was your original different from others? Are you not formed of common earth? Made of one flesh and blood with other men? Shall a little finer house, or finer clothes, make a worm vain among his fellow-worms, and tempt him to scorn his kindred? Consider what you shall be. Your flesh returns to corruption and common earth again; nor shall your dust be distinguished from the meanest beggar or slave; no, nor from the dust of brutes and insects, or the most contemptible of creatures; and as for your soul, that must stand before God in the world of spirits, on a level with the rest of mankind, and divested of all your haughty and flattering circumstances. None of your vain distinctions in this life shall attend you to the judgment-seat. Keep this tribunal in view, and pride will wither and hang down its head.

2. If you have any fancied advantages above others, remember whence you derive them. *Who is it made you differ* from the meanest and vilest of mortals? If *you have received all from God, why do ye boast,* and look big, *as though you had not received?* 1 Cor. iv. 7.

3. Set yourself often in the presence of the great God. Think how mean and contemptible you are in his sight. Learn humility this way as Job did, who *abhorred himself in dust and ashes,* when he saw God in his majesty and glory; *Job* xlii. 5, 6.

4. Think on the glorious condescension of Jesus the Son of God, *who was the express image of his Father, and the brightness of his Father's glory;* Heb. i. 3. and yet put on our feeble flesh and blood, to dwell with men, and to die for them. The man Jesus united to God is the highest of creatures, and yet the humblest. Fix your thoughts on the amazing instances of his humility, and imitate so fair and divine a pattern.

5. Survey the things that raise your pride, consider how vain they are. Is it silver and gold? The dust of the earth! perishing treasures! poor comforters in an hour of inward distress, of sickness or death! Is it beauty, and youth and strength? What withering flowers are all these! What gay and dying vanities, that are wasting hourly, and may be blasted with an east wind!

Is it honour and fame among men? What an empty thing is the breath of mortals! How subject to change! How unjust and feeble a foundation for pride! It is sometimes given to the worst of men without due merit; and even when it is best merited, and most justly given, it is but a sound that vanishes into empty air. Is it high birth, that makes you proud and scornful? This is the honour of your ancestors more than your own, and perhaps it was not raised at first upon virtue or true merit; then it is a worthless thing indeed. Is it your knowledge and wisdom that puffs you up with conceit? It is a sign you want one large branch of it, that is, the knowledge of yourself, for that would make you humble.

6. When the thoughts of pride arise from any excellency you possess, turn your eye immediately upon some of your failings and follies. This would be a proper weight put into the balances, lest while one of them is lifted too high, you imagine the other too weighty.

7. Remember that pride keeps the mind ever uneasy, and fills it with everlasting vexation, while the meek and humble possess abundant peace. The proud man finds many more affronts than his neighbours, partly, because he is more unbeloved, and partly, because he calls almost every thing an affront, which the man of meekness would take no notice of. He is ever fretting, because he never finds so much respect and submission as he desires and expects. Thus he becomes a perpetual torment to himself. *Learn of me,* says the blessed Jesus, *for I am meek and lowly,—and ye shall find rest to your souls;* Matt. xi. 29.

8. Think what mischiefs have arisen from pride through all ages of the world, and even before this world began. Angels were the first proud beings we hear of: Pride turned them into devils, and sent them to hell. It is only from pride come endless contentions, and resentments, murders, wars, and bloodshed, through the nations of mankind.

9. Remember that God himself abhors the proud, and dwells with the humble. A scorner of the poor, and a scoffer at the weak, are some of the most hateful objects in his sight.

10. Think, in the last place, what will be your end, where will be your dwelling, and who will be your company. If God abhors the proud, and beholds them with contempt afar off, he will appoint them a place far distant from his own dwelling, even the place of torment and shame, and immortal anguish, which he built for the eldest sons of pride. But *blessed are the humble and poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven;* Matt. v. 3.

SECTION XIX.

RULES TO PREVENT OR SUPPRESS MALICE AND ENVY.

1. Be not too fond of yourselves, and you will not take up easily an ill-will to others. This excessive selfishness is a great evil, therefore guard against it. It is this narrow and selfish spirit that lessens the general benevolence and good-will which is due to your neighbour, and makes you too soon conceive a dislike to him. Take heed of all little prejudices and unreasonable aversions to any person whatsoever; nor stamp a hateful character on him at once on account of an action or two which are not good. Too high an esteem of self will tempt you to scorn others without reason, perhaps upon the account of their aspect, their shape, their motion, their dress, their poverty, their want of breeding, their name, their family, &c. And this, in a little time, will settle into aversion, or antipathy, and grow up into malice and hatred, especially upon the least disgust. While you are too fond of yourself, and of your own possessions, your own honours, your own family, your own pleasures, you will be ever jealous and suspicious that others stand in your way, and you will too easily indulge malice and envy to rise against them. Whereas if you abated a little of your self-love, and increased and enlarged your generous benevolence and love to mankind, it would have a happy tendency to suppress your hatred and envy of particular persons.

2. Consider whether the persons you hate are good or not. If they are good and pious, your hatred has a double guilt in it, since you are bound to love them both as men and as christians. Will you hate those whom God loves? Will you hate those who have the image of Christ? And in whom the Spirit of God inhabits? If they have any blameable qualities in them, let your charity cover those faults and follies: Let your thoughts dwell rather upon their virtues, and their sacred relation to God. This will have a happy influence to turn your hatred into love. Think of them as members of Christ, and you cannot hate them if you are of that blessed body.

If they are persons who neglect religion, and have not the fear of God, yet they may have some good qualities in them, some moral or social virtues, or some natural excellencies, which may merit your esteem, and invite your love: At least these agreeable qualities may diminish your aversion, and abate your hatred. I confess it is the nature of malice and envy, to overlook all that is good and amiable in a person, and to remark only what is evil and hateful: But this is not the spirit and temper of a christian, nor of Jesus Christ our Master. There was a young man who loved his riches so well, that he refused to become a disciple; yet our blessed Lord saw some good qualities in him, *he looked upon him and loved him;* Mark x. 21.

But if the persons whom you hate have nothing good in them that you can find, then they ought to be pitied rather than to be hated:* They are not worthy of your envy, nor do they need the punishment of your malice in this world, who expose themselves to the wrath and vengeance of God in the world to come. Will you say, they are so impious

* Miseries of the soul are worse than those of the body; but both of them should excite our compassionate regard. If we take all proper occasions to exercise pity and compassion toward the unhappy, it will have a very good influence to cure a malicious and envious temper.

before God, and so injurious to men, that they deserve to be hated? but consider, if you were but punished in every respect as you deserve, both for your offences against God and man, what would become of you? Pity them therefore, as you hope for pity. Imitate the goodness of "your heavenly Father, *who makes his sun to shine, and his rain to fall on the just and on the unjust.*" Matt. v. 45. This is the rule of Christ.

3. Know that a soul filled with envy and malice is its own perpetual torment. All the good things that are spoken of others, and all the blessings which others enjoy, become a matter of grievance and pain to an envious spirit. It frets and vexes at the comforts of mankind, it pines away with rage to see others happy. What a dreadful and undesirable temper is this?

How much more pleasant is it to feel the gentle affections of benevolence and love always warm at the heart! To rejoice in the happiness of our neighbours, and to derive a degree of satisfaction and felicity from all the blessings of mankind which come within the reach of our notice!

4. Remember that a malicious and envious man is hateful in the eyes of all mankind, for his chief joy arises from the miseries of his fellow-creatures. Nobody loves such a temper; even those that practise it themselves hate it in others. Are you willing to expose yourself to the ill-will of mankind? Is it not better to get the love of all men? It is the gentle and harmless, the peaceable, the benevolent and compassionate man, who is the object of universal esteem and love.

And let it be well considered, that by indulging malice in your heart against others, you tempt those persons in a special manner to hate and envy you; and do you know how far their malice may fly into violent extravagancies, into wicked, and spiteful, and revengeful practices? Think with yourselves how far you share in the guilt of such madness, by your indulgence of malice and envy against them. Remember that the fire of wrath and the fire of love kindle their own congenial fires. Kindness and love are the most effectual methods to reduce others to the practice of kindness and love.

5. Malice and envy are the special sins of the devil: They are his peculiar image on the soul of man; he was a murderer from the beginning, and is so to this day. He envied the happiness of our first parents in paradise, and contrived their ruin: He envies us the blessings of the gospel, and our christian hope, and would fain destroy it. Now will you imitate such a hateful character, even the adversary of God and man? Are you fond of bearing his image? Are you willing to become as it were a devil in flesh and blood, rather than imitate the loving and the lovely character of God manifest in the flesh, even the blessed Jesus?

6. Consider how near you are to death and judgment, and the eternal state; and dare not venture into eternity with a malicious temper, or with an envious spirit. Spiteful and malignant passions are wretched things to appear before the throne of God. And let it be awfully remembered too, that there is no cure provided for envy and malice in the other world. God has prepared a remedy for these distempers in the gospel, but they can only be applied in the present life. At the hour of death, *he that is filthy, must be filthy still;* Rev. xxii. 11. and he that is envious and malicious in a prevailing degree, must be envious and malicious still: And what a dreadful state will it be to lie under the everlasting torment of inward malice and envy, to fret and rage among fretting and raging spirits, without the least hope of change through all the ages of eternity?

SECTION XX.

RULES TO MODERATE EXCESSIVE LOVE TO CREATURES.

1. CALL your love often to account at the bar of reason and scripture, to enquire whether the object of it be proper, and the degree of it reasonable; and then you will the sooner spy out its irregularities, and excesses of every kind, and be more powerfully awakened to watch against them.

2. Think of the uncertainty of the highest mortal good, the vanity and insufficiency of any thing, of every thing beneath God to make you happy; and bear not an immortal fondness to perishing comforts.

3. If you are entangled with the excessive love or desire of any thing, whether it be a child or a friend, &c. or if you grow too fond of any particular study, practice, or recreation, any company or enjoyment of any kind, call together and sum up all the inconveniences, the dangers, the unhappy consequences of this your love. Think much of the faults, follies, defects, imperfections, and blemishes of the creature so excessively beloved; survey all these at large, set them in a clear light, write them down for your frequent review, fix them in your memory, and dwell upon them. Never indulge yourself in thinking of the agreeable or tempting qualities of it, at least without a due guard and balance on the other side. This will help to wean the heart by degrees.

4. Practise voluntary self-denial, and absent yourself both in body and mind, from whatsoever you love to excess, as far as duty permits. Set a guard upon your eyes and ears, upon your senses and your thoughts, and avoid every thing that would bring to your mind the object of your immoderate love. This direction, if well practised, will by degrees introduce an indifference and moderation of affection, when you find that you can live without the tempting object.

5. Watch against too great a relish of delight in the things you love excessively, whether they be meats, drinks, businesses, recreations, company, children, friends, or kindred; an abatement of pleasure will abate the excesses of love.

6. Set up the love of God supreme in your heart, and keep it so. This principle of divine love will grow jealous, if any meaner love rise too high, and become its rival, or make too near approaches to its seat and throne. A sovereign love to God will limit and moderate all inferior love.

7. Consider that immoderate love to any creature fills the heart with endless anxieties and vexations, with restless jealousies and disquietudes about it, while the soul is perpetually tossed, as it were, on an ocean of hopes and fears, rising and sinking with every blast of wind. And then the sorrow of parting with it is like tearing our flesh from the bones, or the rending asunder of the heart-strings. What dreadful preparations hath excessive love made for killing heartaches, and overwhelming agonies of sorrow?

8. Remember that excessive love to the creatures hath often provoked a jealous God to imbitter them to us terribly by remarkable providences, or to cut them off suddenly in his anger. *Our God is a jealous God*, and he will destroy his rivals. The way to keep our comforts, is to love them with moderation.

9. Consider that the fewer strong affections, and the less engagements of heart you have to mortal creatures, the easier will it be to leave this world, and enter into the world

of spirits. Death is far more painful and terrible to such a soul which must not only leave the body behind it, but a multitude of other things, to which it is too fondly attached. We must all endure this parting stroke: Let us endeavour then to make it as easy as possible, by keeping our affections loose to all things beneath God and heaven.

SECTION XXI.

RULES TO OVERCOME UNREASONABLE FEARS.

Fear is a powerful and useful passion, to guard us from mischief and misery, to hasten our avoidance of every danger, to drive us to our refuge, and to restrain us from every thing which has a tendency to bring the evil or mischief upon us.

The anger of God is the most proper object of our fear, as we are sinful creatures: Nor can sinners fear the anger of God too much, till they have complied with the appointed methods of his grace. There is also a reverence and holy fear due to the majesty of God, even when we have obtained the most solid hopes of his mercy: We must always fear to sin against God, and keep up a holy jealousy of all temptations to sin. All this is called religious fear.

There are several things also, in the natural life, that we have just reason to fear in some degree; such as lions, bears, and other hurtful animals, men of violence, diseases, and death. And there are many things, in the moral and civil life, which become proper objects for the passion of fear, such as the anger of our parents and superiors, and the practice of those things which expose us to just infamy or punishment among men.

But the fear, which I speak of in this place, is an unjust and unreasonable fear of any creature whatsoever, or of any occurrences of life: It is a timorous spirit, which subjects the whole nature to the power and tyranny of the passion of fear, beyond all reasonable grounds: As for instance, a fear of being alone, or in the dark, a perpetual fear of evil accidents by fire or water, or wicked men; a disquieting fear of ghosts and apparitions; of little inconsiderable animals, such as spiders, frogs, or worms; unreasonable and anxious fears of the loss of estate or friends; fear of poverty or calamity of any kind, whereby we are too often restrained from our present duty, and our lives are made very uncomfortable. All manner of fear becomes irregular, when it rises to an excessive degree, and is superior to the danger. Now to arm ourselves against this tyrant passion, let us make use of the following directions:

1. Abate your love to your flesh, and this mortal life, and to all things that belong to it; then you will not be so much afraid to lose them. *Lay up your treasure* and your hopes *in heaven*, where there is no danger of being deprived of them.

2. Never rest without some comfortable hope of the love of God. If you are his favourite, and under his protection, you need fear nothing. Remember that all creatures in heaven, and earth, and hell, are under his power and supreme government; they can go no further than he permits them, nor can they hurt a hair of your head without his leave. And if he suffers calamities to fall upon you, he can make them turn to your unspeakable advantage. Say with David, *At what time I am afraid, I will trust in thee;* and, *I will not fear what flesh can do against me;* Psalm lvi. 3, 4.

3. Acquaint yourself with Christ Jesus, the Son of God, into whose hands all things are delivered. He hath subdued even the powers of hell to his dominion, and they are

all kept in his chains. Commit yourself daily to his care, both your soul and body, for time and for eternity: He makes and maintains our peace with God, and he guards us from enemies and dangers, and devils. We are safe in his hands.

4. Have a care of contracting new guilt, by indulging sin of any kind, or by the neglect of duty. Guilt is the chiefest and the justest cause of fear; for if God be angry with you, then you have no sufficient security or defence from the injuries of the creatures, which are but the instruments of his providence, in a way of punishment or mercy.

If therefore the evil you fear be probably the effect or consequent of your own sinful conduct, humble yourself before God, and repent, and seek pardoning grace; and *walk humbly* and watchfully, lest you renew your provocations of heaven. Repentance brings hope with it, and lessens the ground of our fears.

5. Think what a dishonour it is to God, for you to set up creatures as the objects of your unreasonable fears, as though they were not in his hand, or as though God, the Creator, were not a sufficient refuge. Read *Isaiah* li. 12, 13.

6. Think how exceeding unlikely most of your fears are to come to pass. It is not once in ten thousand times, probably, that such an event will befal you: Or not one person in ten thousand hath ever met with such an accident in the same circumstances: By this means you may reduce your fear to a degree proportionable to the danger, and then most of our fears will give us but small disturbance.

7. Think how many needless fears you have had in time past, and tormented yourself with them; groundless fears where there was no danger, fears of things that never come to pass. And think also out of how many real dangers God hath rescued you, and make him your trust and defence for times to come. David remembered that *God had delivered him from the lion and the bear*, and therefore he was not afraid of the Philistine giant; 1 *Sam.* xvii. 35—37.

8. Suppose the worst that can come, and be prepared for it by faith in Christ, hope in God, a life of virtue and piety, a serene conscience, and a continual readiness for death itself. Besides all these general directions, I might add many particular rules, according to the particular objects of fear; as for instance,

If it be some present appearances in nature, which may be frightful at first, such as huge impending rocks, seas, cataracts, or waterfalls, or some particular animals that cannot easily hurt you, or such like, endeavour to make them familiar to you, by approaching nearer and nearer to them by degrees; and when you find you are safe, you will obtain gradual courage to meet a frog or a spider, or even a toad or a snake, without shuddering or sweating.

If the groundless fear of some absent evil possesses your spirits, get the government of your fancy, and yield not to its dictates in cases which have no reason on their side. Fancy and fear swell every little danger to a mountain, and turn every bush into a bear. There are no bounds set to the wild and unreasonable ideas of terrible things, which this passion fills the mind with, if it be indulged. Subdue your imaginations, and let them not rove upon frightful objects. For this end avoid the reading or hearing of frightful stories of witches and devils, or terrible accidents, or cruelties and barbarous murders, especially in younger years, or if you are inclined to timorousness and melancholy; for these things will hang about the imagination, and perplex the mind with foolish terrors.

Or if you have a sickly fancy, and are continually afraid of some distemper seizing

you, read not in books of physic, where the symptoms of diseases are described; for fancy will bring almost all these diseases upon you in appearance, and give you the pain, though not always the danger of them. If you are withheld from the practice of your duty, by the fear or threatenings of men, there are many remedies provided against this evil in the book of God, to inspire you with courage in the ways of virtue and religion, *viz.*

1. Preserve the love of God in your heart in its warmest exercise, and its sovereign power. Love will break through a thousand difficulties, and subdue a thousand terrors.

2. Maintain an awful fear of God and his anger in a high degree, and remember it is infinitely more dangerous to provoke God, than to fall into the hands of feeble men: Men *can only kill the body, but God can destroy soul and body in hell;* Matt. x. 28.

3. Keep upon your spirit an awful sense of the evil of sin, as a more formidable thing than any present sufferings. Fear, above all things, to offend God your Father, and your best friend.

4. Think of the courage of the ancient heroes of faith, who exposed themselves to all manner of losses, pains and death, for the sake of Christ: And above all, take the example of Jesus, the Son of God, *who endured the cross, and despised the shame, &c.* Heb. xii. 2.

5. Think of the advantage and glory of suffering for the sake of God and religion: Think of the awful *judgment-seat* of Christ, the joys of heaven, and the infinite recompences provided there for our poor little services and sufferings. But of these things I have written much more largely in the two first sermons of my third volume, which was published some time ago, and I ask leave to remit the reader to those discourses.*

SECTION XXII.

RULES TO GUARD AGAINST IMMODERATE SORROW, AND TO RELIEVE THE SOUL THAT IS UNDER THE POWER OF IT.

The passion of sorrow is necessary to creatures dwelling in a world which hath so much sin and misery in it. As sorrow is originally the effect of sin, so sin ought to be the chief object of it: Yet we may grieve also for our own miseries, or for the miseries of others. Hereby we learn more sensibly the effects of sin in time past, and are excited to avoid it for time to come: Hereby we testify our love to our friends under trouble, and are awakened to endeavour the removal of those evils that we or our friends sustain. Jesus himself, who was all innocence, wept for the sins and sorrows of mankind.

But though sorrow, as well as some other uneasy passions, are ordained for the good of man in the present state, in order to excite him to his proper work; yet when it rises to such a degree, on the account of any losses or troubles we sustain, as to hinder us in the discharge of present duty, it becomes excessive and immoderate, and ought to be restrained or prevented; and perhaps some of the following rules may be useful to this purpose:

1. Have a care of excessive love to any creature whatsoever, for this fondness lays

* See vol. i. p. 325—348.

the foundation of immoderate grief, when Divine Providence takes that creature from us. We should love creatures but as uncertain and perishing comforts. The greater sweetness in the enjoyment, the sharper is the sorrow at parting.

And as part of this direction I may add, let your hopes of any earthly good be very moderate; for, in a thousand instances, we find the possession or attainment of it depends upon great uncertainties, and the concurrence of many favourable circumstances, whereof, if one be wanting, we are disappointed. And if our hope has been raised very high, our surprize of grief will be proportionable in the disappointment.

2. Meditate on the sovereignty, the wisdom, and the goodness of God in his government of the world, and believe that all that he does is wise and good: Learn to submit your own judgment, and your own will, to the wiser determinations of his providence. When our Saviour was to drink of the bitterest cup that ever was put into the hand of a creature, or at least of a creature beloved of God, he submitted to the intense and unknown agonies of that hour, under the awful influence of this rule, "*Father, not my will, but thy will be done;*" Luke xxii. 42. Remember also that divine grace has promised, and divine wisdom knows how to turn the heaviest crosses into blessings. Perhaps God is now doing you the greatest good; do not counterwork him by obstinate murmuring and impatience.

3. Seek after a comfortable and established hope of the love of God in the way of the gospel, and this, if well improved, will be a sufficient balance for every load of temporal sorrow. If you can *cast your burden on the Lord* as your God, *he will sustain*, and he will relieve: *He will not contend always.* Remember the revolutions and the changes of the right hand of God. Reflect upon days past, and former sufferings. How often has God relieved you, as he has delivered his people in ancient times, when there appeared to human prudence, no way for escape, no method of relief? If he be your God, let your soul live upon him. He is not an idol, whose ears cannot hear, and whose hands cannot help. Prayer will ease the wounded spirit, and engage Omnipotence on your side.

4. Take heed of bringing fresh guilt on your conscience, that so you may not be overwhelmed with sorrows of all kinds at once. A peaceful conscience will help to bear up the spirit under some of the heaviest burdens of life; but how unspeakably heavy and painful will these burdens lie upon a spirit wounded with a sense of sin.

5. Let not your thoughts dwell continually upon your distresses and afflictions. Suffer not the chambers of your soul to be ever hung round with dark and dismal ideas: Chew not always the *wormwood and the gall;* but remember the many temporal mercies you enjoy, and the rich treasures of grace in the gospel. Survey the immortal blessings of pardon of sin, and eternal life; the love of God, and the hope of heaven. Look sometimes on these brighter scenes; suffer not your sorrow to bury all your past and present comforts in darkness and oblivion. Thankfulness is one way to joy.

6. Remember, if you are a christian indeed, the springs of your grief cannot flow long; the hour of death will dry them all up. The last moment of this mortal life is a certain and final period to sorrow. Converse much among the mansions and joys of the invisible world, and your hope which is laid up there: The very gleamings of that glory will brighten the darkest providences, and relieve the soul under its sharpest pains.

7. Compare your miseries with your sins, and then you will think them lighter. You will learn then to bear your burdens with a more serene and peaceful mind, and turn your sorrows into repentance for sin. But, alas! we aggravate our sufferings, and extenuate and excuse our sins: Whereas sufferings would appear lighter, if we did but consider how much heavier evils we have deserved from the hands of a holy and offended God.

8. Compare your own afflictions with the afflictions of many others, in former and latter times. The passion of sorrow so unreasonably magnifies your own sufferings, as though there was never any case like it before: Whereas, perhaps, you suffer nothing but what is the common lot of human nature: and shall this overwhelm you when there are many who have been loaded with uncommon distresses, and yet have sustained them with holy courage and patience.

9. Consider that sorrow is indeed an evil, that is, a natural evil, for it is the pain of the mind, and it is never desirable for itself, but only as it is a thing appointed for sinful creatures in this world, in order to teach us some lessons of righteousness, to wean us from the love of creatures, to embitter to us our sinful follies, and to drive us to some duty towards God or man: And if these ends be attained, sorrow should be dismissed. *God doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men;* Lam. iii. 33. *By the sorrow of heart* and countenance, the heart itself is to be made better; *Eccles.* vii. 3. If this be done, bless God, and rejoice.

10. Think on the many dreadful effects and consequences of excessive sorrow, where it is indulged beyond all reasonable grounds. 1. It takes away the sweetness and relish of all present mercies, and makes us undervalue them all: It deprives us even of the delightful sense of the love of God: It untunes both the heart and the lips, and withholds the tongue from thankfulness and praise. 2. It destroys the pleasure even of those parts of religion which we practise, and banishes comfort from the soul, even in the midst of the most refreshing ordinances: For wheresoever the body is, or whatsoever the man is engaged in, the eye of the mind is still fixed upon its own distress. 3. It sinks and weakens our trust and hope in the blessed God: It fills the spirit with impatience, the heart with discontent, and the tongue with murmurs against the wisest and the best of beings. Where immoderate grief is indulged, it prevents the soul from learning those very lessons of piety and duty which the affliction was sent to teach us. 4. It raises in the soul a froward and a fretful temper, makes us peevish and displeased with every thing round about us. Immoderate sorrow inclines to perpetual resentment: the heart within is uneasy, and there is nothing without can please us: It fills the place where we are with incessant complaints, and makes us a burden to our friends, instead of a blessing. 5. It stupifies the better powers of the soul, it buries the active faculties in a sort of dead sloth; it weakens the heart and the hand to all the duties of life, and renders us almost useless in the world. The mourner sits with folded hands, brooding over his own sorrows, and dark and deadly images ever present themselves to his view; the weight of grief hangs heavy upon his heart, and affects his very senses and limbs; he fancies himself on the confines of the dead, and he knows not how to rise up and act among the living. 6. Such overwhelming sorrow doth great dishonour to religion, and the grace of God: It discourages young persons who are looking towards heaven, when they find christians of such a sour, disconsolate, and gloomy temper, because it tempts them to believe, that melancholy belongs to the ways of godliness, and overspreads all the

road to paradise. 7. Excessive grief doubles the real affliction, without giving any relief, and has been often attended with dismal consequences: It hath sometimes taken away the senses, blinded the eyes with weeping, distracted the thoughts, clouded and disturbed the reasoning powers, and driven the mourner into a silent and sullen madness:* And sometimes it hath worn out the flesh itself, and brought the body to an untimely grave. *The sorrow of this world worketh death;* 2 Cor. vii. 10. 8. There are instances, not a few, wherein immoderate grief hath prevailed so far, as to hurry persons into despair of the mercy of God, and armed their own hands against themselves, to put an end to their miserable life on earth, by plunging into eternity with a venture of everlasting misery.

11. When your thoughts have meditated on all these dismal attendants of immoderate sorrow, set your will and your hands to work, as well as your mind. Endeavour to employ yourself in some business, though your sorrow would plead for sloth, and would let all things run at random. Instead of wasting life in fruitless moans and complaints, do something, if possible, toward the relief of your present affliction, and the removal of that burden which overpresses you. Arise, and shake off this heavy clog, break these fetters of the soul, constrain yourself to activity of some kind or other, if it be but in a way of amusement. Divert the mind this way from the dark and mournful ideas that press upon it. Many a person had *gone down mourning to their graves* for the loss of some dear friend or relative, if the necessary duties and business of life had not given them a constant and powerful relief.

12. Read over the commands of scripture, to *rejoice in the Lord;* Phil. iv. 4. and make conscience of fulfilling that duty as well as any other. True religion gives a sufficient foundation for constant joy, and *the joy of the Lord shall be your strength*, Neh. viii. 10. to discharge many other duties of righteousness. If a spirit of melancholy seize you, there may be several useful advices found in Mr. Rogers's "Treatise of Trouble of Mind," second edition, 1706, and Mr. Baxter's "Account of Melancholy, and his Directions about it," gathered out of his works by Mr. Samuel Clifford, and reduced to order in a little book, 1716.

SECTION XXIII.

RULES TO GOVERN OUR ANGER, AND TO PREVENT THE SINFUL EFFECT OF IT, VIZ. REVENGE.

Anger, considered in itself, is not an unlawful passion. If we ourselves were perfect and innocent, and were to converse only with innocent creatures, perhaps there would be no occasion for the exercise of it. But since we dwell in a world where vice, folly, impiety, oppression, injustice, and wickedness abound, there will be frequent and just occasion for anger. We have reason too often to be angry with ourselves when we indulge iniquity and folly; and we may lawfully express our resentment against the crimes and vices of others: Their offences against God, against men, against ourselves, may raise in us a righteous resentment. Bold impiety against our Maker, or injustice and cruelty

* It was ingeniously observed by a writer on this subject, that in bodily grievances we take a wiser course, and seek for every thing that can give us ease; but we use quite contrary methods with our minds, we exasperate every scratch till it becomes a wound; and then we rub and fret the wounds, and keep them so long open, till very often they become incurable.

against our fellow-creatures, stir up our just indignation and wrath. Insolence, oppression, and mischief, practised or attempted against ourselves, or our friends, awaken the powers of flesh and blood for sudden self-defence, or the relief of the sufferer. These ferments and commotions of nature were designed to be a strong and sensible rebuke to iniquity of every kind, and a means to prevent the repetition of it. Our blessed Lord himself, who was meek, and holy, and humble in perfection, yet found reason sometimes here on earth to give a loose to his sacred resentments: We also are expressly permitted to be angry if we take heed of sin; *Eph.* iv. 26.

But, alas! our natures are so perverse and corrupt, that it is very hard for us to give a loose to any angry passion against men, without running into some sentiments of malice or revenge, and thereby sinning against God. Our anger is very apt to kindle about trifles, or upon mere suspicion, without just cause; or sometimes it rises too high where the cause may be just; or it continues too long, and it turns into hatred: And in either of these three cases it becomes sinful.

It is therefore with the utmost caution that this passion should ever be suffered to arise: And unless we quickly suppress it again, we shall be in great danger of bringing guilt upon our souls. The blessed apostle therefore wisely connects the permission, the caution, and the restraint together, Eph. iv. 26. *Be angry and sin not: Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.* The violent efforts of this passion are so frequent and dangerous, that I shall dwell longer upon the regulation of it. Let me first lay down directions to moderate and restrain our anger, and then propose some considerations to enforce the practice of them.

Directions to moderate and restrain anger:

1. Be not nice or humourous in the common things of life, *viz.* meats, drinks, clothes, forms of civility, attendance, &c. If we indulge excessive niceness and curiosity in these things, we shall meet with daily and hourly vexations. Be not therefore greatly pleased or greatly displeased with little things. These are the most frequent occasions of sudden and violent resentments, therefore gain a wise indifference to them all. Let your desires and your aversions to the common objects and occurrences in this life be but few and feeble. Make it your daily business to moderate your aversions and desires, and to govern them by reason. This will guard you against many a ruffle of spirit both of anger and sorrow.

2. Subdue pride. This is the parent and the nurse of wrath and resentment: It is this that makes us suspect injuries and affronts perpetually; this makes us take offences where none is given, and aggravates every real injury beyond all measure of truth or justice. Pride is a most impatient vice, and can bear nothing; but the humble soul is meek and patient, and meets with few affronts, or it believes but few. Let us remember we live in a world where every person has his own opinions and his own desires as well as we; and if we would be easy and calm, we must learn to bear opposition and contradiction, for every body will not yield up their sentiments and will to ours, nor is it fit they should. Accustom yourselves to candour, and take every thing in the best sense: Why should you suppose your neighbour designs to affront you?

3. Suffer not your thoughts to dwell on the injuries you have received, or on the provoking words that have been spoken against you. Not only learn the art of neglecting injuries at the time you receive them, but let them grow less and less every moment, till they die out of your mind. Suffer not your musing imagination when you are alone to swell and

magnify the provocations that have been given you, nor to blow up the fire of this uneasy passion.

4. Avoid much conversation with men of wrath, and endeavour to keep clear of all disputes with weak minds, with obstinate spirits, and especially with persons of an angry and peevish temper, as far as you can. If the flint and steel strike against each other in a way of dispute, the sparks of fire will be ready to fly out, and the angry flame will be kindled.

5. *Love your neighbour as yourself.* You are not immediately kindled into wrath against yourself, nor express it with such violence, though you have often done yourself more injury by your own sins than all other persons ever could do you. You do not bear malice against yourself, nor hate yourself, though you have perhaps some evil qualities belonging to you, and you have often sinned against your own soul: You forbear yourself long, and you forgive yourself easily: Learn then to forbear and forgive your neighbours.

"Deal not with others as you would not have others deal with you." Would you think it reasonable that your neighbour should take your words in the worst sense, and quarrel with you for every trip in conversation? That he should resent every little miscarriage that you are guilty of, that he should fly into a sudden fury of passion against you upon every failure of duty or civility? Have you not some follies that other men must bear with, and will you not bear with others? Do you never provoke your neighbour, and yet will you forgive no provocations? Have you no offences to be pardoned, why then do you not pardon others? It was very justly said, by a writer on this subject, that men's mistakes, imprudences, and inadvertences, are so mutual and so numerous, that were not this piece of kindness mutual also, quarrelings and feuds must be infinite. In short, I must say, a person that would claim a right continually to resent, ought himself to be perfect and free from faults: And then I might add, he would be so wise and good as seldom to indulge his resentments.

6. Observe a person in all his airs and behaviours, when his angry passions are raised high, and exert themselves: Mark the frowns on his countenance, the flame and fierceness of his eyes, his threatening and revengeful looks, the disorder and tumult that appears in his whole nature: What an unpleasing and shameful figure he makes! How much like a person half distracted, and whose reason is under a cloud! How he stamps and stares! What rash vows and desperate wishes! Anger is a short madness; it throws a person off his guard; neither truth nor reason appear to him as reason or truth The violence of the passion throws off all restraints, the phrenzy disdains all law and justice, and drives the man to wild extravagance? Is this the lovely, the desirable pattern that you choose to imitate? Do you like this figure so well as to put it on yourself?

7. Live always under the eye of God, and suppress rising anger with the reverence of his name and presence. Remember that a holy God and holy angels behold you; and are you not ashamed to appear in their sight under all the extravagant disorders of this passion? Remember the dignity of your nature as man, and your character as a christian and a child of God.

8. Keep the sacred example of Jesus ever before your eyes: How meek under the vilest affronts! How patient under the rudest injuries and most barbarous treatment! How forgiving even to his bloody murderers! How did he return the highest good for the greatest evil, and paid down his blood and life to redeem his enemies from hell, and to purchase eternal joy and glory for them! *Let such a mind be in you as was in Christ the*

Son of God; Phil. ii. 5. *who being reviled, reviled not again, and when he suffered he threatened not, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps;* 1 Pet. ii. 21, 23.

9. When you find the warm passion arising, suppress the first motion of it. It is much easier to be subdued at first, than if you indulge it a little. A spark is sooner quenched than a flame.

10. Command your tongue to silence, and your hands to peace, if you cannot presently command your spirit. Suffer not the vehement efforts of wrath to break out in reproachful names and spiteful words, much less into blows of revenge. These outward violences, if once let loose, go generally beyond all the just bounds of resentment, they farther enrage the inward flame and fury, and thus become greatly criminal. Give the fire of your passion, when it is just kindled, no public vent, and perhaps it will quickly be stifled and die.

11. At least, suppress all violent discoveries of it so long till you have taken some time to consider whether you have received any real injury or no, whether the injury was accidental or designed, whether the offence be of such a heinous nature and degree as your present passion represents it. Many offences are great and heinous only in the light of a ruffled fancy, and not in themselves. It is said concerning Julius Cæsar, that upon any provocation he would repeat the Roman alphabet before he suffered himself to speak, that he might be more just and calm in his resentments. The delay of a few moments has set many seeming affronts in a juster and kinder light; it has often lessened if not annihilated the supposed injury, and prevented violence and revenge.

12. If you cannot govern your spirit, and suppress the outward appearances and efforts of your passion, take the first opportunity of leaving the place and company: Withdraw from the temptation, and retire to prayer; confess before God the ungovernable frame of your own spirit; bewail the pride and passion that dwells in you. Ask forgiveness of heaven, and beg the divine influences of grace to subdue the disorderly ferments of your nature.

13. If you have unhappily indulged your anger to break out to the reproach and injury of your neighbour, as well as to your own shame, do not only repent in secret before God, but take a proper time to confess it to the person whom you have injured, and ask their pardon. This will have a considerable tendency to future watchfulness, and help to guard you from the same folly for time to come.

Among other directions I might have added, avoid rude and quarrelsome company, avoid excessive drinking and gaming, and all lewd and vicious courses: But I hope I have no need to mention these rules to those persons for whom I chiefly write. I proceed now to lay down some considerations which may enforce the practice of these rules.

1. Think with yourself, how much injury you do yourself by suffering your angry passions to rise and prevail. The fire of wrath and resentment preys upon your nature, destroys your health and your ease, fills your spirit with tumults and disquietudes, exposes you to shame before men, breaks the peace of your conscience, brings you under guilt before God, and makes a painful preparation for bitter repentance. Why will you punish yourself because another has injured you? Or, if another man be rude and wrathful, ill-natured and ill-bred, why will you imitate him, and expose yourself?

2. Think again, how much more pleasure and glory there is in overcoming the violence of your own spirit, than in yielding to your headstrong passions, and suffering yourselves to be carried away with the torrent of your own resentments. *He that rules his own spirit, is a greater hero than he that conquers a city;* Prov. xvi. 32. To be angry about

trifles is mean and childish; to rage and be furious is brutish; and to maintain perpetual wrath is akin to the practice and temper of devils; but to prevent or suppress rising resentment is wise and glorious, is manly and divine. This one piece of conduct will raise our reputation for wisdom among men more than a hundred fine speeches, or superior airs, and will greatly adorn our character as persons of piety. *The wisdom that is from above is peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated;* James iii. 17.

3. Consider how unfit you are for every duty of religion and worship, while you are under the power of this uneasy passion. With what face, or courage, or comfort can you draw near to God, while you cherish undue wrath in your heart? The sinful ferment of your nature indisposes you for worship, the guilt thereof makes your service unacceptable, and a defiled conscience makes you unwilling to come near to a God of holiness; *Matt.* v. 23. If there be a quarrel between thee and thy brother, *leave thy gift at the altar, go and be reconciled to thy brother, and then* return *and offer thy gift.*

4. Think of the dreadful effects of ungoverned anger in the world. What tragical scenes has it introduced! What impious mischief! How has it broken all the dearest bonds of friendship and kindred! How has it divided and ruined families, and cities, and nations! It has filled the earth with private and public murders and cruelties. Blood, ruin, and destruction have attended it from the days of Cain and Abel to this day.

It is the wrath of princes that hath made such vast slaughters among men, hath turned beautiful cities into heaps of rubbish, hath unpeopled nations, and sent multitudes of souls into eternity by untimely death. And it must be acknowledged too with shame, that the wrath of priests and people hath torn churches to pieces, and joined with kings to erect bloody inquisitions, those sacred slaughter-houses, to kindle fires of martyrdom, and murder millions, under pretence of zeal for God.

5. Consider that it is a glorious singularity of the religion of Christ, that it commands and teaches us *to forgive our enemies*, and to *love them that hate us;* Matt. v. 44. But for a man that pretends to be a christian to indulge a resenting humour, and to be ever fretful and angry, and meditating revenge, what a shame and dishonour does it cast upon the religion that we profess, and upon the sacred name of Jesus, whom we adore? Wrathful christians are a scandal to their Master, *the Prince* of Peace.

6. Think with yourself how many greater crimes has the blessed God forgiven you, if you are a christian indeed; and will you not forgive your brother his petty offences? Has the Maker and Lord of heaven and earth forgiven you *ten thousand talents*, and will you not forgive your brother *a hundred pence?* Did the Son of God make himself a sacrifice for your offences, that you might be pardoned, and will you make your brother, who has offended you, a sacrifice to your fury?

7. But consider farther, that if you do not forgive your brother, who has offended you, you cannot expect to be forgiven of God: Nay, it is evident, according to the express sentence of the gospel, you cannot be forgiven without it. *If you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you;* Matt. vi. 15. Do you not pray for pardon of your trespasses, even as you forgive those who trespass against you, and will you sin against your own prayers?

8. Remember that revenge belongs to God and the magistrate: Now you must not take their work out of their hands. It is granted, that there may be some seasons and occasions wherein it may be proper and necessary to shew some degrees of resentment, and let your enemy know that you are not a senseless block, or a stone without feeling,

in order to guard you from universal insults and continual injuries. To resist the efforts of oppression and violence, and to smite others, so far as is plainly necessary for mere self-defence, has been always judged lawful. The measure of this resentment, and the manner of it in particular instances, must be taught by religion and prudence: But remember, that it is far better to suffer two injuries than to revenge one. *If a man will strike thee on one cheek, rather turn the other to him,* Matt. v. 39. than take the awful work of vengeance into thy own hand. In case of lesser injuries or affronts, it is best generally to neglect and forget them: In greater injuries, or the frequent repetition of less, you may resent so far as is necessary for the defence of yourself, or for the reformation of the offender: But never let resentment carry revenge in it, that is merely to repay evil for evil.

9. Think with yourself, when you receive some high provocation, that God places you at that hour under a special trial, and he waits to see what honour you will do to his grace and his gospel, and whether the flesh or the spirit will come off conqueror: He expects that you should shew how well you are taught by the religion of Christ to *love your enemies, and bless them that curse you;* Matt. v. 44. It is of infinitely greater importance to you, to keep your own spirit easy and innocent, and adorn the doctrine of Christ, than to take the fullest revenge of him that has injured you.

10. Consider this, that by returning good for evil, you will better obtain all the supposed designs and ends of anger, than by practising revenge: For, 1. If your enemy has any thing of humanity in him, any tenderness about his heart, you will melt him down by such a carriage, you will soften his spirit into love, and bring him, as it were, to your foot. However, 2. If this desirable effect be not obtained, you shew your obedience to the gospel, you put your case entirely into the hand of God, who will plead your cause; Rom. xii. 20, 21. *Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good: If thy enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; so shalt thou heap coals of fire on his head;* either to melt him down to friendly submission, or to bring the vengeance of God upon him, if he will not be reconciled.

11. If you are angry with a good man, do you not hope to meet him shortly in heaven, in the regions of peace and love? And will you not be ashamed to meet him in heaven whom you reviled and persecuted here on earth? If it be a wicked man against whom you shew your resentment, he will shortly fall under the just wrath of God, unless he repent, and he needs not to have the addition of yours: He will be given up to the rage and insults of devils hereafter, and you need not begin to torment him here with your revenges.

12. Suppose you knew that you were near death, and that your enemy were also dying, would you not desire to be reconciled to him before that awful moment? Consider that you are both dying creatures, borderers on the grave and eternity; *Suffer not the sun to go down upon your wrath;* Eph. iv. 26. lest both your *souls should be required this night,* lest you die before you are reconciled; and I am sure, if you are a christian, an unreconciled spirit will make the hour of death very uneasy, and render your passage out of this world dark and uncomfortable. But I persuade myself better things concerning every one who is a true disciple of Christ.

SECTION XXIV.

SOME UNIVERSAL DIRECTIONS WHICH RELATE TO ALL THE FOREMENTIONED PASSIONS, AND THE REGULATION OF THEM.

I shall divide these last general directions into two sorts: The first sort may be called moral and philosophical; and the second, religious or divine. The moral or philosophical directions are these:

1. Let the regulation of your passions be the care of your younger years, and carry on this necessary work through your whole life without intermission. The grave is the only burying-place of unruly affections. If you are so happy as to have begun this self-government in childhood, and been taught to suppress the irregular motions of the heart betimes, you will make the remaining work much more easy, and the following parts of life more peaceful and honourable; though perhaps there is no complete victory till we are dismissed from flesh and blood.

Root up the foul weeds of pride, malice and envy, as soon as ever you find them springing: Let them be nipped in their very bud and infancy, lest they fix their roots too deep in the heart to be removed, and bear the bitter fruits of mischief, iniquity, and death. A tender plant is sooner rooted up than an old and sturdy tree. Bend the more lawful and useful passions of love, desire, joy, fear, anger and sorrow, like young trees, into a beautiful and regular form, and prune off all their luxuriant branches. Begin to bring them to obey the laws of reason betimes. Keep a constant and an early watch against the wanderings and the outbreakings of every affection. Let wisdom put a bridle on them before they are grown headstrong and unruly, that you may guide them usefully, like a managed horse, through the various paths of human life, and they may bear you on to duty and happiness.

And I would earnestly recommend it to parents and teachers, to insinuate the advantage of ruling the passions to all the young people whom nature or providence hath put under their care. Let them be taught these lessons in the very morning of life; otherwise you may expect that a young humorist will grow up to an intolerable peevishness, and become a sour old wretch: A wrathful child, untaught to bridle his rage, will grow to an incurable fury. Spite and envy, uncurbed between ten and twenty years of age, will be in danger of making a devil at fifty. An Ethiopian may as well *change his skin, or a leopard his spots, as those who have long practised evil can learn to do well;* Jer. xiii. 23.

2. Suffer not your irregular passions to excuse themselves by taking false names upon them, and screen themselves from censure and mortification by any disguises of virtue. Vain ambition and affectation of applause will sometimes squander away money, appear magnificent and bountiful, far beyond the circumstances of the giver, and contrary to his duty, and the interest of his family. Then this ambitious and profuse humour puts on the name of liberality and generous beneficence, and hopes to excuse itself under this disguise, and to cover itself from just censure: But a wise observer will not be cheated by these false titles.

Pride and wrath would sometimes call themselves a becoming greatness of spirit: But he hath a greater soul who can treat inferiors with all gentleness, and hath learned to

neglect and forget supposed affronts and injuries, as mean and little things which deserve no special notice. When some persons have abandoned themselves to excessive sorrow, they call it a debt of love to the deceased friend; and under this colour they go on to encourage and swell their grief, which had risen before to a dangerous height.

Others again will vindicate their passionate resentments of injury done to their reputation, or any neglect of duty and respect to themselves under the name of tenderness of spirit: They cannot bear the least slight or censure: You can hardly touch them but you hurt them: Every admonition is a reproach, and every real affront immediately overwhelms them with a mixture of anger and sorrow: They have too much of the child in them when they are grown to the stature of men. But while we shew some pity to these infirmities of human nature, yet these passions and this temper should be called by their proper names, that is, a weakness of soul, which ought to be cured, and an excessive love of self, which ought to be mortified. We must learn to go through the difficulties of life with a becoming courage, and a decent neglect of those little oppositions or injuries which otherwise will ever be breaking in upon our peace.

3. Learn and practise the art of self-denial with regard to your appetites of every kind, and you will gain an easier government of your passions. Rule the flesh well, in order to rule the spirit. Passion has its chief seat in animal nature; and if the animal be brought under the yoke betimes, it will be more obedient to reason, and less susceptive of irregular commotions. Temperance is one of the first of virtues; but a pampered appetite supplies new force, vigour and obstinacy to unruly passions.

4. Restrain your needless curiosity, and all solicitous enquiries into things which were better unknown. How many plentiful springs of fear, sorrow, anger and hatred, have been found out and broken up by this laborious digging? Have a care of an over-curious search into such things as might have safely remained for ever secret, and the ignorance of them had prevented many foolish and hurtful passions. A fond solicitude to know all that our friends or our foes say of us, is often recompensed with vexing disquietude and anguish of soul.

5. Get a general benevolence to mankind rooted in your heart. This will keep you from being too selfish. It is for the most part the selfish passions which are immoderate and unruly. There is not so much danger in those which arise from love to our neighbour.

6. Never let your passions determine your esteem or opinion of things or persons: These always bribe or bias the judgment to their own side, and thence it is evident, that they will often lead it astray. Whatsoever passion makes any representations of a thing, you must always make some grains of allowance; for if it happen to be right in the main, yet it generally colours every thing too high and strong. It is therefore a matter of great importance to form and settle your judgment of things and persons which you have to do with in the calmest and serenest hours of life, and when you are free from the influence of every affection; and let these judgments be reserved as rules for your constant conduct in human life, that whensoever temptations appear, or when passion solicits your nature, and makes efforts to rise and reign, you may ever have some settled truths and rules of conduct ready at hand to govern it.

7. Observe what are the passions to which you are most liable, or to which you are most disposed by your age, or any other circumstances of time, place, &c. Consider what passions have the deepest root in your natural constitution, and watch against them: Enquire into yourself which are those affections to which your temper is most

inclined, or to which you are most exposed by your station and circumstances in the world, and set a special guard upon them. Fear and jealousy are needful to defend you against the sin that easily besets you, the vice that dwells in your flesh and blood.

8. Watch against all those seasons and temptations, those dangerous hours, those occurrences, or that company which in time past have been most provoking to any of your evil passions, and whereby you have been tempted to give them too great a loose. Let the burnt child dread the fire. An ox or an ass will not easily be led to those places where they have received wounds or bruises: Shall a man, a christian, have less sense than brute creatures?

9. Have a care of indulging the dangerous passions too far, or too often, such as fear, sorrow, anger, &c. lest by too frequent repetition, by too intense a degree, or too long a continuance, they should grow into a settled habit and temper; then it will cost much more labour and pains to subdue them.

10. Whensoever you feel some of the better and more kindly sort of passions, especially those which flow from the love of God or your neighbour, working in you, encourage and promote them in a due degree, that they may fix in your heart more firmly the principles of goodness, and form your very nature and temper to virtue and religion.

11. Where the power of truth and reason has not been sufficient to subdue an irregular passion, it has often been found useful to abate the violence of a passion, if we call the thoughts away from that subject by diverting the mind to another employment.

12. Sometimes also one unruly passion is suppressed by raising another which is more harmless or useful. So when a stupid inactivity arises from excessive sorrow, it may be corrected and removed by some frightful representation, awakening the passion of fear, or perhaps, by some artful and innocent method of teazing the mourner, gently to kindle him a little into anger. Joab seems to have used both these methods to rouse David to his duty, in the midst of his excessive sorrow for Absalom, 2 *Sam.* xix. 1—8. where, in a free and bold speech, he made the king afraid, lest the people should forsake him, if he gave way farther to that inactive passion.

Or if any particular passion prevail too much over us, sometimes we may change the object of the same passion, and thereby prevent its irregularity and excess. If a timorous christian avoid his duty, for fear of the reproach of the world, or the wrath of the magistrate, set the wrath of God and hell-fire before him, that the fear of divine vengeance may cure him of the fear of man. This was the practice of our blessed Lord to give courage to his disciples, Luke xii. 4, 5. *Fear not them who kill the body, and can do no more; but fear him who can cast into hell.* But I proceed now more particularly to the religious directions, which are these that follow:

1. Never think yourself sufficiently guarded against the power and danger of any of your vicious passions, till your nature be renewed by divine grace, till there be a thorough and universal change wrought in you, till you have obtained firm inward principles of universal holiness. If you would have *the fruit good*, it is in vain to labour in breaking off every irregular bud, or lopping the branches; but *the tree* itself *must be made good*, in order to bear good fruit. This is the direction of our blessed Saviour, *Matt.* xii. 33.

2. Give yourself no rest till you can find the love of God has gained the supreme place in your heart. Love is the ruling passion, and if that be fixed upon the highest and best of objects, it will keep all the other powers and passions of nature in order

and subjection, as I have shewn at large in the "Second Discourse of the Love of God."

3. Keep your conscience always tender: Maintain a holy jealousy of yourselves, and a constant fear of offending God: By this means your spirit will be perpetually awakened and alarmed when an evil passion begins to stir, or when you are near the place or moment of danger, or within the reach of temptation.

4. Set God always before you in his majesty and in his mercy. Let an awful and comfortable sense of his immediate presence at all times and in all places be a sovereign and divine guard upon all the dangerous efforts of your nature, or unruly motions of your spirit. This will suppress rising pride and envy, anger and malice: This will be a sovereign and sure defence against the tyranny of foolish or sinful fear, as well as a sweet support under heavy sorrows, and an effectual means to restrain them from excess.

5. Commit your soul, with all its powers and passions, to the keeping of Christ, in this state of infirmity and union to flesh and blood. He knows what it is to wear a body of flesh, with its various ferments and emotions, though in him these were all pure and innocent. He is a compassionate and sympathizing *High Priest*, who can *be touched with the feeling of our infirmities*, having himself been tempted in all things like us, *Heb.* iv. 15. as far as innocence would permit; and he is exalted and ordained of God to take care of feeble man, wrestling with strong temptations.

6. Whenever you feel a passion arise, and are doubtful whether it be fit to be indulged or no, make a trial of it in prayer, by appealing to God concerning it; see whether it will bear that test, even the test of a tender conscience near the throne of God.

7. Make every irregular passion a matter of humble mourning and complaint before the mercy-seat: Pray earnestly for supplies of daily strength against the irregular efforts of nature and passion: Cry out for help from above, whenever you are combating with your unruly affections; God has promised sufficient aid in the gospel. His grace can enable you both to conquer, and to bear vastly beyond the feeble powers of your own nature. Reason and resolution will do much, but religion is a diviner spring of strength and victory.

8. Call yourself continually to account for every irregular fit of passion. Let it never break out and defile your soul, without some effectual mortification of it by holy repentance. Think how it discomposed your spirit, disturbed your quiet, ruffled your temper, broke your peace; think how it drew your heart away from God, indisposed you for acts of worship, and unfitted you for death. Think of this, and be ashamed of your foolish indulgence of any faulty and violent affection of the soul: Condemn yourself without spreading abroad your excuses and apologies; and print this shame and self-condemnation deep upon your spirit: Let it live there in plain and painful characters, and review it especially in the hour of new temptation. Thus every immoderate effort of passion, and every victory that it has obtained over you, shall become an occasion of its own ruin.

9. Treasure up in your mind and memory, such words of scripture as are happily suited to subdue the various unruly passions of nature. The word of God is given us for this end. *I have laid up thy word in my heart*, saith David, *that I might not sin against thee;* And *wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way*, a young man, whose spirits are warm, and whose passions are violent, but *by taking heed thereto, according to thy word?* Psalm cxix. 9, 11. When these enemies of peace and holiness

arise within you, take *the sword of the Spirit* to hew them down; the *sword of the Spirit* is *the word of God;* Ephes. vi. 17. Many a vicious passion faints, and languishes, and dies at the appearance of divine truth. Shall I mention a few sentences of holy writ, which are proper to allay these criminal efforts of nature?

Against pride and scorn, read Prov. xi. 2. *When pride cometh, then cometh shame, but with the lowly is wisdom.* Prov. xvi. 18. *Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.* Prov. vi. 16, 17. *The Lord hateth a proud look.* Eccles. vii. 8. *He that is poor in spirit, is better than he that is proud in spirit.* James iv. 6. *God resisteth the proud, but giveth more grace to the humble.* Psalm i. 1. *Blessed is the man that sitteth not in the seat of the scornful.* Prov. xxiv. 9. *The scorner is an abomination to men.* Prov. xix. 29. *Judgments are prepared for scorners.* Prov. xvii. 5. *Whoso mocketh the poor, reproacheth his Maker.*

Against malice and envy. Rom. xiii. 9. *Love your neighbour as yourself.* Eph. iv. 31. *Let all bitterness and wrath,—and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.* 1 Cor. xiv. 20. *In understanding be ye men, but in malice be ye children.* 1 Pet. i. 22. *Love one another with a pure heart fervently.* 1 John iv. 20. *If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar.* Job v. 2. *Envy slayeth the silly one.* Prov. xiv. 30. *Envy is the rottenness of the bones.* Gal. v. 26. *Let us not be desirous of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another;* for *hatred, wrath, strife, variance, envyings, &c.* are all *works of the flesh,* verse 20, 21.

Against excessive love of creatures. Matt. x. 37. *He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me.* 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30. *The time is short; It remaineth, therefore, that they that have wives, be as though they had none;—and they that buy, as though they possessed not.* Col. iii. 2. *Set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth.* 1 John ii. 15. *Love not the world, neither the things which are in the world: If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

Against immoderate and sinful fear. There is scarce any prohibition in all the Bible more frequently repeated than "fear not." Isaiah's prophecy abounds with this caution. Chapter xli. 10. *Fear not, I am with thee: Be not dismayed, I am thy God.* Isaiah li. 12, 13. *I am he that comforteth you; who art thou, that thou art afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man, that shall be made as grass, and forgettest the Lord thy Maker?* Psalm xxvii. 1. *The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?* Luke xii. 4. *Fear not them which kill the body, but after that can do no more.* Psalm xxvii. 14. *Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart.* Rev. xxi. 8. *The fearful and unbelieving shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone.*

Against excessive sorrow. 1 Cor. vii. 30. *Let those that weep be as though they wept not.* 2 Cor. vii. 10. *Worldly sorrow worketh death.* 1 Thess. iv. 13. *Sorrow not for the dead, as others which have no hope.* Prov. xv. 13. *By sorrow of heart the spirit is broken.* Phil. iv. 4, *Rejoice always in the Lord, and again I say, rejoice.* The book of Psalms is so rich a treasure of divine supports and reliefs under those two disquieting passions of fear and sorrow, that there are few psalms without some of these consolations. And in the New Testament, *Rom.* viii. and *Heb.* xii. are chapters written for the comfort of suffering and afflicted christians.

Against immoderate anger and revenge. Prov. xv. 1. *A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger.* Prov. xix. 11. *The discretion of a man deferreth*

his anger, and it is his glory to pass over a transgression. Prov. xxi. 24. *Haughty scorner is his name, who dealeth in proud wrath.* Prov. xii. 16. *A fool's wrath is presently kindled, but a prudent man covereth shame.* Prov. xiv. 29. *He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding, but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly.* Eccles. vii. 9. *Anger resteth in the bosom of fools.* Matt. xi. 29. *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.* Rom. xii. 18, 19. *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves.—Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.* Eph. iv. 26, *Be angry and sin not: Let not the sun go down upon your wrath, neither give place to the devil.* Coloss. iii. 12, 13. *Put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.* And particularly treasure up in your memory the divine characters of charity. 1 Cor. xiii. 4—7. *Charity suffereth long, and is kind, envieth not, vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth,* or as it should be rendered, *covereth all things,* that is, all faults, *believeth all things,* and *hopeth all things,* that is, all good, and *endureth all things,* that is, all injuries and hardships for the sake of others.

The tenth and last direction to regulate our passions about the things of earth, is to live much in the expectation of death, and in the view and hope of eternal things. Death and judgment, heaven and hell, are such grand and awful ideas, that where they are duly considered, they will make the things of this life appear so very little and inconsiderable, as to be scarce worthy of our hopes and fears, our desires and aversions, our wrath and resentments, our sorrows and joys. Such a steady prospect and expectation of things infinite and everlasting, will, by degrees, dissolve the force of visible and temporal things, and make them unable to raise any wild and unruly passions within us. Happy the soul that has a strong and lively faith of unseen worlds, of future terrors and glories: This will cure the vicious disorders of flesh and sense, appetite and passion: This will raise the spirit on the wings of devout affection to the borders of paradise, and attemper the soul to the business and the joys of the blessed.

DISCOURSES

OF

THE LOVE OF GOD,

AND ITS

INFLUENCE ON ALL THE PASSIONS:

WITH

A DISCOVERY

OF THE

RIGHT USE AND ABUSE OF THEM IN MATTERS OF RELIGION.

A DEVOUT MEDITATION

IS ANNEXED TO EACH DISCOURSE.

THE PREFACE.

IN the first edition of these discourses "the Doctrine of the Passions" stood as an introduction to them, wherein their general nature was explained, their various kinds reduced to some regular order, the uses of them in human life represented, and moral and divine rules were proposed for the government of these natural and active powers. This little treatise has been much enlarged, and printed by itself, under a distinct title, *viz.* "The Doctrine of the Passions explained and improved." These "Discourses of the Love of God, and the Use and Abuse of the Passions in Religion" now follow; and since there are readers of a different taste, who have desired each of them alone, they may now choose for themselves, or they may order the bookseller to join them together if they please.

Many years are now passed since the general design of both these treatises was formed, and some brief sketches of them were drawn, which had lain by me in long silence among other papers. That which inclined me at last to draw up these discourses of the "Use of the Passions in Religion" into a more regular form, was the growing deadness and degeneracy of our age in vital religion, though it grew bright in rational and polite learning. There are too many persons who have imbibed, and propagate this notion, that it is almost the only business of a preacher to teach the necessary doctrines and duties of our holy religion, by a mere explication of the word of God, without enforcing these things on the conscience by a pathetic address to the heart; and that the business of a christian in his attendance on sermons, is to learn what these doctrines and duties are, without taking any pains to awaken the devout sensations of hope and fear, and love and joy, though the God of nature hath ordained them to be the most effectual allurements or spurs to duty in this present animal state. We are often told, that this warm and affectionate religion belongs only to the weaker parts of mankind, and is not strong and manly enough for persons of sense and good reasoning. But where the religious use of the passions is renounced and abandoned, we do not find this cold and dry reasoning sufficient to raise virtue and piety to any great and honourable degree, even in their men of sense, without the assistance of pious affections.

On the other hand, it must be acknowledged also, there have been many persons who have made their religion to consist too much in the working of their passions, without a due exercise of reason in the things of God. They have contented themselves with some devout raptures without seeking after clear conceptions of divine things, or building their faith and hope, and practice, upon a just and solid foundation of sacred knowledge. Whatsoever is vehement, if it hath but the name of God annexed to it, they are ready to think and call sacred and divine. This sort of religion lies very much exposed to all the wild temptations of fancy and enthusiasm: A great deal of the bigotry of the world, and

the madness of persecution may be ascribed to this unhappy spring. I thought it necessary therefore, to speak of the abuse of the passions, as well as the use of them, and to guard against mistakes on both sides.

As a foundation for these discourses, I chose to treat of the love of God, which in a sovereign manner rules and manages, awakens or suppresses all the other passions of the soul. The whole train of affections, both the painful and the pleasant ones, are under the power and regulation of love. In my pursuit of this subject, I have endeavoured to avoid all extremes; that is, neither to turn religion into a matter of speculation or cold reasoning, nor to give up the devout christian to all wandering fooleries of warm and ungoverned passion. I hope I have maintained the middle way, which, as it is most agreeable to the holy scripture, and to the genius of christianity, so it has produced the noblest fruits of righteousness in every age. On this account I may presume, that the track which I have pursued will give no just offence to the wisest and the best of christians.

In order to make this work more serviceable to the purposes of practical godliness, I have endeavoured to form a pathetic meditation upon the argument of each discourse, that I might, as far as possible, exemplifiy the practice of those things which I recommend to the world, and assist the devout reader to make a present use of them toward his advancement in the christian life.

DISCOURSES

OF

THE LOVE OF GOD, &c.

DISCOURSE I.

THE AFFECTIONATE AND SUPREME LOVE OF GOD.

MARK xii. 30.

THOU SHALT LOVE THE LORD THY GOD WITH ALL THY HEART.

AMONG all the teachers of religion that have been sent from God to men, the most eminent and illustrious are Moses and Christ; Moses the servant of the living God, and Christ *his only begotten Son.* Both of them lay the foundation of all true religion in the unity of God, and both of them make our religion to consist in love. Thus saith Moses in the sixth of Deuteronomy, whence my text is cited, and thus saith the blessed Jesus in the place where my text lies, *Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. Thou shalt love him with all thy heart.*

It is no wonder that all the powers of our natures, with all the utmost extent of our capacities, must be devoted to the love and service of this God, since there is but one, since he is God alone, and *there is none besides him;* Isaiah xliv. 6. He must reign over the heart and the soul, over all our intellectual and our bodily powers, supreme, and without a rival. Though the love of our neighbour is required both by Moses and Christ, as a necessary part of our religion, yet it must never stand in competition with the love of our God.

Some suppose the supreme and intense degree of this love, to be the whole design of Christ, in recommending the love of God to us in all these four expressions, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, viz.* to intimate in general that all the faculties of nature should be employed in the love and service of God, with the greatest intenseness and full vigour of exercise.

But if we should distinguish these sentences, according to the different powers of nature, into so many different significations, I think they may be most naturally thus explained: God must be loved with *all the mind,* that is, he must stand highest in the esteem of the judgment: He must be loved *with all the soul,* that is, with the strongest attachment of the will to him: He must be loved *with all the heart,* that is, with the warmest and sincerest affection: And he must be loved with *all the strength,* that is, this love must be manifested by the utmost exercise and activity of all the inferior powers.

The heart in the language of scripture, and in the common sense of men, is the seat of the passions, that is, of fear, hope, love, hatred, joy, sorrow, shame, desire, and such like, which are usually called the passions or affections of the heart, I shall not stand in this place to give a more exact or philosophical account of them, having done that in another treatise.* If it be enquired why the heart is said to be the seat of the passions, there is this good reason for it, *viz.* It is by sensible effects on the heart, that several of the affections do chiefly exert and manifest themselves; and it was chiefly for this reason that jewish philosophy gave the soul of man its chief residence in the heart, and made it to be the seat of the passions.

The heart also in scripture, and in almost all nations and languages, is used to express or imply sincerity; what is done from the heart is done sincerely, perhaps, because the passions are naturally sincere, and are not so easy to be disguised as the outward actions of men.

Now, since it is my design to treat of the exercises of the passions, or affections of the heart in the affairs of religion, I have chosen this sentence as the foundation of my discourses. The plain and obvious proposition contained in the words is this, *viz.*

"The Lord our God is the proper object of our most sincere affection, and our supreme love." It is not enough for the eye to be lifted up to him, or the knee to bow before him; it is not enough for the tongue to speak of him, or the hand to act for his interest in the world; all this may be done by painted hypocrites, whose religion is all disguise and vanity: But the heart with all the inward powers and passions must be devoted to him in the first place: This is religion indeed. The great God values not the service of men, if the heart be not in it: The Lord sees and judges the heart; he has no regard to outward forms of worship, if there be no inward adoration, if no devout affection be employed therein. It is therefore a matter of infinite importance, to have the whole heart engaged steadfastly for God. If this be done we shall have a sufficient evidence in ourselves, that we are truly religious, and are beloved of God. In treating this subject, I shall consider these seven things:

I. What is presupposed and implied in the affectionate and supreme love of God.

II. What will be the effects of this supreme love to God on all the other passions, or how this divine passion will engage all the rest of the affectionate powers in the interests of religion.

III. Of what use and importance the passions are in religion, and what advantage is to be derived from them.

IV. How far the passions may be abused, even in religious concerns, or what is the irregular use of them, and how their efforts should be limited and restrained.—Under each of these heads I shall propose some useful reflections.

V. We shall shew how the affectionate christian may be vindicated, against the cavils and reproaches of men, in his warmest exercises of devotion.

VI. What relief or comfort may be given to humble and sincere christians, who complain that they feel but very low degrees of this affectionate love to God, or of the exercise of pious passions, either in public worship, or in their devout retirements.

VII. What are the most proper and effectual methods of exciting and engaging the affections in religion. Of each of these in their order.

3

* The Doctrine of the Passions, page 577.

First, "What is presupposed and implied in the supreme and affectionate love of God?" I answer, these five things.*

I. Some good degrees of the knowledge of God, and such an acquaintance with him, as may raise the highest esteem of him in our mind. It is impossible that we should love any thing that we know not: And it is not to be expected that we should love God supremely, or *with all our heart*, if we have not known him to be more excellent, and more desirable than all other things we are acquainted with. We must have the highest opinion of his transcendent worth, or we cannot love him above all things.

It is granted, we may love or delight in some objects of an inferior nature, as they are instruments of our health or ease, or comfort; so we are said to love our habitation and our food, because they minister to our conveniency or support in the present life. We may love some poor worthless wretches with good-will and compassion, because we design to bestow some benefits upon them. We love our country and our kindred with a sort of natural attachment of the heart, because they belong to ourselves, and we are as it were of a piece with them. We love our friends because we esteem them possessed of some valuable properties, and able to confer benefits on us, or to relieve our wants: But unless we see the great and blessed God, as a being possessed of the highest excellencies, and capable of bestowing on us the richest benefits; unless we see him as an all-sufficient good, we shall never love him with our whole heart: The affection to so unseen and spiritual a being as God is, can never rise high where the esteem is but low: Where the love ought to be superior to all other loves, the esteem must be transcendent.

II. The affectionate and supreme love of God presupposes some hope of an interest to be obtained in his favour, and the highest advantages to be derived from him. If I lie down in despair of his mercy, I cannot look on God, even in all his supreme excellencies, with an eye of love. The devil, the worst of creatures, knows more of the transcendent glory and worth of the great God, than the wisest and the best of mortals here on earth: But he knows there is no hope for him to obtain an interest in his favour, and therefore he continues in his old enmity. His rebellion has cut him off from all expectation of divine mercy, and therefore he cannot love this God of infinite excellency. A dreadful state indeed for an intelligent being, that he cannot love what he knows to be infinitely amiable.

Hope is the most alluring spring of love. Terror and slavish fear stand opposite to this holy affection: Such fear *has torment* in it, and so far as we fear God as an enemy, *we are not made perfect in* his *love;* 1 John iv. 18. We love him, because we hope that he has, or he will love us: It is the assurance, or at least the expectation of some interest in God that engages the most affectionate love: And, perhaps, the words of my text may have some reference hereto, when it is said, *thou shalt love the Lord thy God.* When we believe or hope that the Lord is our God, we cannot but love him.

III. This love of the heart implies a strong inclination of the will toward God, a steady bent of soul toward this blessed Author of our being and happiness: It implies a choice of him above and beyond all things else, as our most desirable portion and our eternal good. If any thing in this world be the chosen portion of our souls, if any thing

* I might have described the affectionate love of God here by the love of esteem, the love of benevolence, and the love of complacency, according to the distributions of love in the "Treatise of the Passions," mentioned in the preface; but I choose rather in this place to shew what acts or operations of the understanding and will are presupposed and included in the *love* of God: The more affectionate operations of it are reserved to the next discourse.

beneath and besides God be made our chief hope, our support, and our life, our hearts will run out in strongest affections toward it, for it is our chief happiness; and then we can never love God as it beomes a creature to love his Creator.

The holy Psalmist was a most affectionate lover of his God, and how often does he call him the *portion of his inheritance, his refuge, and his hope?* Psalm xvi. 5. cxlii. 5. and in Psalm lxxiii. 26. *Thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.* Blessed saint! He had chosen God for his eternal all.

Under this head I should add also, that where the will is thus attached to God, the soul will exert itself in continual wishes for the honour of God in the world: It is the nature of love to wish well, and to do good to the beloved object; and since God can receive no other good from us, but the manifestation of his excellencies and honours among men, we shall earnestly seek and wish this glory of God, if we are sincere lovers of him.

IV. This affectionate and supreme love of God includes in it an outgoing of the heart after him, with most intense longings, and most pleasing sensations: This is what we are wont to call more eminently the love of desire, and the love of delight, which I shall speak of more at large in the following discourse. The heart of a sincere good man is restless till it find God, that is, till it obtain a solid hope and persuasion of his love, a growing conformity to him, and constant delight in him. The heart is not easy without God: It acquiesces and rests in him alone. If I have God for my friend, and my everlasting portion, I have all: If he be absent, *O that I knew where I might find him!* Job xxiii. 3. And if he manifest his presence with his divine influences, "Come back, O my soul, from amongst the creatures; come back, and return to God thy rest;" *Psalm* cxvi. 7.

V. Where the love of God reigns in the affections it will command all the other powers of nature, and all the rest of the passions to act suitably to this sovereign and ruling affection of love: The eye will often look up to God in a way of faith and humble dependance: The ear will be attentive to his holy word: The hand will be lifted up to heaven in daily requests: The knees will be bended in humble worship: All the outward powers will be busy in doing the will of God, and promoting his glory: *He that loves God, will keep his commandments,* and fulfil every present duty with delight: He will endeavour to please God in all his actions, and watch against and avoid whatsoever may offend him. And while the several outward powers are thus engaged, all the inward affections of nature will be employed in correspondent exercises. Supreme love will govern all the active train of human passions, and lead them captive to cheerful obedience.

This brings me to the next thing I proposed: But before I enter upon it I would make these four reflections, which will conclude the present discourse.

This Discourse may be divided here.

Reflection I. How vain are all their pretences to love God who know little or nothing of him, who are neither acquainted with the glorious perfections of his nature, nor with the wondrous discoveries of his grace! Love must be founded in knowledge. How vain are their pretences to love God with all their heart, and in a supreme degree, who never saw him to be a being of transcendent worth, of surpassing excellency, and capable of making them for ever happy; who value their *corn, and their wine, and their oil,* their business, their riches, or their diversions more than God and his love! How senseless and absurd is the pretence to love God above all things, if we do not resolve to live upon him as our hope and happiness; if we do not choose him to be our God and our All, our

chief and all-sufficient portion in this world, and that to come! Where the idea of God as a being of supreme excellence doth not reign in the mind, where the will is not determined and fixed on God, as our supreme good, men are strangers to this sacred and divine affection of love. Till this be done, we cannot be said to love God with all the heart.

Reflection II. How necessary and useful a practice it is for a christian to meditate often on the transcendent perfection and worth of the blessed God, to survey his attributes, and his grace in Christ Jesus, to keep up in the mind a constant idea of his supreme excellence, and frequently to repeat and confirm the choice of him, as our highest hope, our portion, and our everlasting good! This will keep the love of God warm at the heart, and maintain the divine affection in its primitive life and vigour. But if our idea of the adorable and supreme excellence of God grow faint and feeble, and sink lower in the mind; if we lose the sight of his amiable glories, the sense of his amazing love in the gospel, his rich promises and his alluring grace, if our will cleave not to him as our chief good, and live not on him daily as our spring of happiness, we shall abate the fervency of this sacred passion, our love to God will grow cold by degrees, and suffer great and guilty decays.

Reflection III. How greatly and eternally are we indebted to Jesus the Son of God, who has revealed the Father to us in all his most amiable characters and glories, and brought him, as it were, within the reach of our love! The three great springs of love to God are these: A clear discovery of what God is in himself; a lively sense of what he has done for us; and a well-grounded hope of what he will bestow upon us. All these are owing chiefly to our blessed Jesus. Let us consider them distinctly:

1. It is he, even the beloved Son of God, who lay in the bosom of the Father, who has made a fuller and brighter discovery to us what God is, what an admirable and transcendent Being, a Spirit glorious in all perfections. It is true, the light of nature dictates some of these things to us, and the ancient prophets have given further manifestations. *But none knows the Father so as the Son does, and those to whom the Son will reveal him;* Matt. xi. 27. That blessed person, who is *one with the Father,* must know him best. That illustrious man, who is so intimately united to God, and *in whom dwells all the fulness of the godhead bodily;* Col. ii. 9. He whose name is Emmanuel, *God with us;* Matt. i. 23. or *God manifest in the flesh;* 1 Tim. iii. 16. he must know the Father with such an exquisite knowledge, as far transcends the reach of all our ideas.

Let it be noted also, that the blessed Jesus came down from heaven not only to shew God all-glorious to men, but to make him appear all-lovely and desirable in the eyes of sinners, by representing him in all the wonders of his compassion and forgiving mercy. Even a great, a just, and a holy God, is lovely and amiable in the sight of guilty creatures, when he is willing to *reconcile the world to himself* in and by his Son Jesus Christ, not imputing to them their iniquities; 2 *Cor.* v. 19. Such a sight of God is the first attractive of our love.

2. It is the Son of God who came to inform us what God has done for us, and thereby to engage our love. The reason of man, and our daily experience, teach us that he is the author of our being and our blessings; *He causes the sun to shine, and his rain to descend on the earth;* Matt. v. 45. *he gives us fruitful seasons, and fills our hearts with food and gladness;* Acts xiv. 17. But it is Jesus, who has told us the eternal counsels of his Father's love, and what kind designs he formed for our recovery from sin and hell, when,

in his own fore-knowledge, he beheld us fallen and miserable: He has told us, what eternal and unfailing provision God has made for us, by giving us into the hands of his Son, even into those hands, where he has entrusted the infinite concerns of his own honour; and that he appointed his Son to redeem our lives, by his own bloody death.

This is love glorious indeed, and fit to allure and kindle our warmest affections to God. It is the blessed Son of God himself, who by his Father's appointment, has suffered agonies and sorrows of unknown kinds, unknown degrees, for us. *He poured out his* own *soul to death* to secure us from the deserved wrath and vengeance of God; he sustained many a painful stroke, to make a way for us to partake of his Father's mercy, and to render the offended Majesty of heaven a proper and more engaging object of our love.

3. Again, it is this same glorious person, the Son of God, who has informed us at large, not only what God has already done, but what he will do for us; and has given us the hope of everlasting blessings. He has confirmed all the words of grace that God spake to men by angels and prophets in former ages; and he has added many a rich and most express promise of a glorious resurrection, and a future state, and set them before us in a divine light, beyond what the prophets or the angels ever knew in ancient times: He has assured returning sinners of the pardon of highest crimes, and the most aggravated iniquities; and he hath secured the everlasting favour and presence of God to all his followers; for by the Father's appointment he is gone *to prepare mansions* of glory *for them, that where he is they may be also;* that they may dwell with him, and with his Father for ever.

Thus it appears that our everlasting thanks and praises are due to the blessed Jesus, who has laid the foundation of love between an offended God and his guilty creature, man. He has revealed the great God to us, has told us what he is, and has set him before us, in his most amiable glories: He has taught us what wonders of mercy God hath wrought for us already, and what blessings he will bestow on us, through the future ages of eternity: And thus he hath opened all the springs of love to allure our hearts to God. What christian can withhold his love and praise from so worthy, so divine a benefactor?

Reflection IV. I may therefore well add, in the last place, that no person in heaven or earth was so proper to recommend to us this divine virtue, the love of God, as Christ Jesus, our Saviour, who speaks the words of my text: He who was himself the beloved Son of God, the first favourite of heaven, the highest object of his Father's love, and the best and most perfect lover of his Father: He who was the great peacemaker between God and sinners, the chief minister and messenger of his Father's love to men. If he had not undertook to make peace, we had still continued *children of wrath*, and in the same state with fallen angels, who are never invited to return to the love of God. There is no prophet, no messenger sent to require or charge them to love God, for there is no priest or peacemaker appointed for them.

Who is so fit a person to urge upon our consciences this blessed command of love to God, as he who came to redeem us from our state of rebellion and enmity, to deliver us from the anger of God, and *the curse of the law*, and everlasting death? Who can give us such pathetic motives, and so powerful a charge to *love the Lord our God with our whole heart*, as he who came to write his Father's love to us in lines of blood, even his own blood? He whose heart was pierced for the sake of sinful men; he who came to seal the covenant of love between God and man with the anguish of his soul, and the

blood of his heart! How all-glorious and well-chosen is this messenger of the love and precepts of God! This blessed Prophet, who is sent from God to recommend to us the eternal duty of divine love; who is also our *great High Priest* to reconcile us to God! Yet how little success has the message had on the hearts of men! What a sad and just occasion of shame and holy mourning! Forbid it, O God, that such a messenger and such a message should be sent from heaven in vain!

Meditation. "What shall I do to become a true lover of God? Since I know there is but one God, I would give up my whole heart to him alone; I would fain have him reign in my affections supreme and without a rival. But let me recollect myself a little, and let me not deny what God and his grace have wrought in my soul. Do I not love him sincerely, and above all things? Am I not possessed of those qualifications which are contained and implied in the affectionate and supreme love of God? Let me run over them in meditation and self-enquiry.

"Have I not beheld him as the first and the best of beings? Have I not seen him most glorious in himself, and worthy of the highest esteem and love? Am I not deeply convinced and firmly persuaded that he is the only all-sufficient good? That he is the overflowing spring of grace and blessedness? Have I not been taught to see the vanity and emptiness of all things beneath and besides God, and that without him I can never arrive at true happiness? Has he not the most transcendent place in my esteem? Yes, O Lord, through thy grace I can say, the creatures are nothing in comparison of thee; nor can any thing appear in my eyes more lovely and more desirable than God and his love.

"Again: Have I not been invited and raised by thy grace to some humble hope of thy favour? Hast thou not revealed thyself, in thy word, as a God condescending to be reconciled to sinners, willing to be reconciled to me? As a God willing to make creatures happy, even every creature that desires to centre itself in God, and take up its rest in him: Oh that sublime, that most excellent, that supreme Being, the holy and blessed God! How merciful! How compassionate! Have I not seen him in his word descending within the reach of my hope? And have I not rejoiced to think that he gives me leave to hope in him, as an eternal portion for my soul, and that he holds out the arm of his love to receive me?

"May I not proceed yet further, O my God? Has not my will been drawn powerfully toward thee, and made choice of thee as my everlasting good? Have I not turned my back upon creatures at thy call, and divided myself from every thing, that I might be more nearly united to thee? Have I not renounced them all, that I might be entirely the Lord's? Does not my soul with firm purpose cleave to thee, as my immortal portion, and my ever-during inheritance?

"Yet again, O my Lord, does not my heart sometimes go out after thee, with most pleasing sensations! Oh that I could say it never wandered! But I humbly hope it will never, never be at rest while absent from God. Sometimes, like the needle that is feebly touched with the sovereign influence of the loadstone, it may be drawn aside by other influences, and it is too ready to wander from the beloved point: But may I not appeal to thee, O my God, that like the needle, it is ever restless till it point to thee again, to thee, the object of my strongest desire, and my supreme love?

"Are not my flesh and spirit, with all their active powers, under the command of this divine principle, this holy fire of love? Does not this heavenly affection reign in my

soul over all my faculties, all my senses, and all my passions? Are not all my little affairs in this world, and all my more important concerns, regulated and governed by this holy love? Canst thou bear the thought, O my soul, of acting contrary to this inward vital and reigning principle? Are not all my mortal interests subdued and devoted to divine love, and all my immortal interests united and summed up in it? *Whom have I in heaven, O Lord, but thee, and what is there on earth that I desire in comparison of thee?* Psalm lxxiii. 25.

" These eyes of mine, whither shall they look but toward thee? These feet, whither shall they go but on thy messages? What shall these hands do, but the work which thou appointest them? What is there that my tongue is employed in, with so much delight, as in speaking of thee, and to thee, *my Lord, and my God?* All that I am, and all that I have, is thine for ever and ever: Am I not then a sincere lover?

" Blessed be the name of Jesus, the Son of God, and my Saviour, that has descended from heaven to dwell with dust and ashes, that he might bring such worthless wretches as we are within the attractive force of divine love: Our sins stood between God and man like a wall of dreadful separation; but by his glorious atonement he has removed the bar, and made the way of access to God free and open, that God and man might be united in the bond of perpetual love: He called sinners by his own voice, and he calls them still by the word of his gospel, to partake of this privilege. O blessed Messenger of divine love! And he sends down his own Spirit from heaven, where he dwells, to make us willing to partake of this felicity, and to draw our hearts near to God. Come, O Divine Spirit, come, dwell in this heart of mine, as an unchangeable principle of holy love! Guard my heart from all meaner allurements and influences, while I am travelling through the dangerous region of this world, till I am arrived beyond the reach of danger, till I rest for ever in the bosom of God, my supreme love, and my everlasting all."

DISCOURSE II.

DIVINE LOVE IS THE COMMANDING PASSION.

HAVING declared at large, in the former sermon, what is implied in the supreme love of God; the second general head of discourse requires me to shew, how this one passion of divine love will influence all the other affections of the heart. The whole world are witnesses to this effect of love in the common affairs of mankind; and this powerful passion still retains its own nature and sovereignty over the rest, when God is the object of it, which will appear in the following instances:

I. If the soul be warmed with divine love, "the various discoveries that God makes of himself to us, will not only be matter of frequent contemplation, but of pleasing wonder." Admiration or wonder is a noble passion, arising from the view of something that is new and strange, or upon the notice of some rare and uncommon object: Now when so glorious and transcendent a Being, as the great and blessed God, becomes the object of our notice and our love, with what pleasure do we survey his glories, which are so rare, so uncommon, that there are none to compare with them? We shall meditate on the surprizing discoveries that he has made of himself, till we find new matter of holy admiration in all of them. Sincere and fervent love is ever finding some new beauties and wonders in the person so much beloved.

The lover of God traces the footsteps of infinite wisdom and all-sufficient power, in the works of nature and providence: *When he beholds the heavens, the work of the fingers of God, and the moon and stars which he has created,* Psalm viii. 3. he first observes their immense vastness, their order and beauty, and wonders at the skill and divine contrivance of him that made them: *O Lord, how great, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all;* Psalm civ. 24. And then he wonders again at the condescending goodness of God to his little creature, man: *Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that thou shouldst visit him?* Psalm viii. 4. The loving-kindness of God has many admirable circumstances in it, as well as his wisdom and power; and therefore the royal Psalmist calls it marvellous; *Psalm* xxxi. 21. and spends many a psalm in the devout admiration of it.

Many of the providences of God are surprizing: *He alone doth great wonders;* Psalm cxxxvi. 4. In the heavens and in the earth *he doth things unsearchable, marvellous things without number;* Job v. 9. The soul that loves God will recall his ancient wonders with sweet delight; *Psalm* lxxvii. 11. and will take notice of all his marvellous ways in his present conduct of the world and the church.

There is sufficient matter in God, for the pleasurable and everlasting entertainment of this holy passion: He is an immense ocean of glories and wonders. There is nothing in God but what would be marvellous and astonishing to us, if we had our eyes divinely enlightened, and our hearts fired with divine love. Every creature has something in it that surpasses our knowledge, and commands our admiration: But what are all these in comparison of God, the all-wise and almighty artificer, who made them all by his wisdom,

and the breath of his mouth? The soul that loves God is ready to see and take notice of God in every thing: He walks through the fields, he observes the wonders of divine workmanship in every different tree on his right hand and on his left, in the herbs and flowers that he treads with his feet, in the rich diversity of shapes and colours and ornaments of nature: He beholds and admires his God in them all. He sees the birds in their airy flight, or perched upon the branches, and sending forth their various melody: He observes the grazing flocks, and the larger cattle in their different forms and manners of life; he looks down upon little insects, and takes notice of their vigorous and busy life and motions, their shining bodies, and their golden or painted wings, he beholds and he admires his God in them all: In the least things of nature, he can read the greatness of God, and it is what of God he finds in the creature that renders creatures more delightful to him. Creatures are but his steps to help him to rise toward God.

If it were possible for our admiration, to run through and finish all the marvellous things of nature and providence, there would remain still a vast field of wonders in his word, in his law, in his gospel, in his transactions of grace with the children of men. David, that intense lover of God, was ever meditating on his statutes, his word, his testimonies; he searched *wondrous things out of his law;* Psalm cxix. 18. and ever found something in them worthy of his high esteem, and his holy joy. *O how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day. I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy commandments are exceeding broad;* Psalm cxix. 96, 97. But above all, the riches of mercy manifested in the gospel, awaken and raise the holy soul to a sublime degree of astonishment. *This is the Lord's doing indeed, and it is marvellous in our eyes;* Psalm cxviii. 23. This was *the mystery that was hid in God, and kept secret since the world began,* it was concealed from ages and generations, and *is now made manifest, to the intent that now unto principalities and powers* of heaven, as well as men on earth, *might be made known* by the church, *the manifold,* the amazing *wisdom of God;* Rom. xvi. 25. Ephes. iii. 9. There is enough in this gospel to raise the wonder even of the sinners that refuse it: *Hear, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish;* Acts xiii. 41. Much more will it seize and employ the admiring powers of every holy soul, that has tasted of the love of God, and been partaker of this salvation. There is a divine and tenfold pleasure attends this exercise of sacred admiration, while the soul, in the language of faith and love, can say, *Thou art the God, who alone doest wonders,* and thou art my God for ever and ever.

I might add after all, there is yet still another world of wonders to employ the lover of God, and that is, the person of his Son Jesus Christ our Saviour. There God discovers himself in his fullest grace and wisdom, in his highest power and perfection. The attributes of the Father shine transcendently glorious in his Son, and become the object of love and wonder to men and angels. He is the fairest *image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature;* Col. i. 16. *He is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person;* Heb. i. 3. All the marvellous things that God the Father ever wrought, it was in and by his Son. Did he create all things out of nothing? It was by Jesus Christ; *Eph.* iii. 9. Does he govern the world with amazing wisdom? It is by making his Son Jesus the Governor and Lord of all things. Does he redeem and save guilty sinners from everlasting misery? These wonders of mercy are transacted by the cradle and the cross of Jesus, by the death and the life of Christ, by the sorrows, the sufferings, and the victories of the Son of God. *His name is called Wonderful;* Isaiah ix. 6. For he who is *the child born,* is also *the mighty God:* The infant of days is the *ever-*

lasting Father, the first and the last, the beginning and the end of all things. What sublime and sacred raptures of love and wonder join together, when a devout christian contemplates his God in his nature, in his providences, in all his works, in the pages of his holy book, and in the face of his Son the blessed Jesus! But I have dwelt too long amidst these divine wonders, the following particulars must be more briefly handled.

II. Divine love will command the affection of holy desire. A sense of the favour of God, and the influences of his grace, will be the matter of our most intense wishes and importunate requests. We shall long for the presence of God above all things, both here and hereafter. This was the fixed desire, this the passionate aspiration of the holy Psalmist; Psalm cxix. 58. *I entreated thy favour with my whole heart.* What warm and pathetic language breaks from the lips of this great saint, this sublime lover of God, in the xlii, lxiii, and lxxxiv. Psalms? *My soul longeth, yea, fainteth for the courts of the Lord, my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God: As the heart panteth after water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. Early, O God, will I seek thee, for thy loving-kindness is better than life.* When he dwells in his own palace he longs for the divine presence; Psalm ci. 2. *I will walk within my house with a perfect heart; O when wilt thou come unto me?* But his eminent desire is to dwell for ever in the sanctuary; *one thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may ever abide in his house, there to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire* and converse with him *in his holy temple;* Psalm xxvii. 4. O happy soul, where all these active springs of passion are touched and influenced by divine grace! Hunger and thirst, and all the longing powers and appetites of animal nature, are too few and too feeble to express the holy desires of a soul breathing after the presence of its God.

III. When the love of God reigns in the heart, all the joys and pleasures of the man will unite and centre in God. It will be our sweetest satisfaction, and most exalted delight, to have God ever near us, and to be ever near to God. As absence from God is a pain at the heart of a lively christian, fired with divine love, so his glorious presence is his chief joy. With what affectionate language does the holy soul of David rejoice in God, as his God, and how does he employ the charming arts of poesy and music to express his own joys and the praises of his almighty Friend? One must run through a multitude of his psalms to copy out the bright expressions of holy delight, which he found in the love of God; even the prospect and hope of waiting on him in his temple, fills his spirit with sacred pleasure; Psalm xliii. 4. *I will go to the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy, yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God.* Psalm lxiii. 5, 6. *When I remember thee on my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches, my soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips.*

This joy which is derived from the love of God, is supreme over all other joys, and independent of other comforts: When all the *nether springs* of delight among creatures are dried up, this is a fountain of eternal pleasure, a spring of ever-flowing delight. Hab. iii. 17—19. *Though the fig-tree shall not blossom, and there shall no fruit be in the vine, though the field shall yield no meat, and the flock shall be cut off from the fold, yet the Lord God is my strength, I will rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my salvation.*

IV. Where the love of God prevails in the heart, every thing that belongs to God, his word, his institutions, his church and people, will in some proportion be the objects of our choice and love, of our holy desire and delight. Has God condescended to give us his word, to write a book of knowledge and grace for the use of men? How much delight

will the holy soul take in reading and hearing the blessed words of this book! A flame of heavenly love kindled in the heart, will engage us to converse often with those divine notices of himself, which God has sent us from heaven. Our *delight will be placed in the law*, and gospel of our God, *and therein shall we meditate day and night;* Psalm i. 2. *O how I love thy law*, says David, *it is my meditation all the day;* and in the night he remembers the name of God; *Psalm* cxix. 55, 97.

Has the great God built a temple for himself on earth, even the assemblies of the saints? Has he appointed methods of worship in which men shall address his Majesty, and whereby he will make them partakers of his love? How desirous is the lively christian to attend on all these methods of divine appointment, to abide in the sanctuary, to frequent *the house of prayer*, and wait for the manifestations of the power and glory of God? *I have loved the habitation of thy house*, says David, *and the place where thy honour dwelleth;* Psalm xxvi. 8. *How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!* lxxxiv. 1.

Has God raised up children for himself, out of the sons and daughters of fallen Adam? Then every one *that loves God, will love his offspring too;* 1 John v. 1. This is one of the chief evidences of a sincere love to God, when we love his people, and those who bear his image, without the narrow view of a sect or party, or particular tribe of such a name. The saint loves all the saints, and the christian loves all christians; those who are most like to God *are the excellent of the earth, in whom is all his delight;* Psalm xvi. 2. And therefore he pities them under all their sorrows, and he relieves their wants according to his power, because they stand in so near a relation to the God whom he loves, and bear his lovely image; 1 *John* iii. 16, 17.

Has the great and glorious God one peculiar Son, his first-born, his only-begotten, who bears his perfect image, and whom he loves above all the rest? this also is the chief object of a christian's love. Not father nor mother, son nor daughter, nor the wife of the bosom, lie so near the heart of a christian, as the Son of God doth. He not only bears the nearest resemblance to God, but *he is one with God; in him dwells all the fulness of the godhead bodily;* Col. ii. 9. He is Emmanuel, *God with us;* Matt. i. 23. *God manifested in the flesh;* 1 Tim. iii. 16. There is more of the power and wisdom, there is more of the majesty and mercy of God shines through the human nature of his Son Jesus, than in all the millions of men and angels, and all the worlds of unknown creatures that God ever made: And therefore the sanctified affections of the soul go forth in the strongest manner towards Jesus, the Son of God: He is in their eyes *the chiefest of ten thousand, altogether lovely.*

V. Where the passion of divine love reigns gloriously in the heart, every creature separated from God will fall under a holy neglect and contempt. Nothing will serve or satisfy the good man, in the room and place of his God: All things, when laid in the balance, *are lighter than vanity; they are* in his esteem, *like a small dust* of the earth before a mountain, *or the drop of a bucket*, when compared with the ocean; *Isaiah* xl. 15. The language of such a soul is, *whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee;* Psalm lxxiii. 25. Creatures, with all their attractives and allurements, have no power to charm his heart away from God: The divine lover is *crucified to the world;* it is like a dead thing to him, tasteless, disrelishing, worthless and vain: There is a vast emptiness, and wide and universal desolation in the world, if the soul see not God in it.

Business and diversions, cities and palaces, with their various ornaments, fields and

groves, spring, summer and autumn, with all their flowery beauties, and their tasteful blessings, are some of the delights of the sons of men: Books and learning, and polite company, and refined science, are the more elegant joys of ingenious spirits: These things are the enticing gratifications of the senses of the mind of man: They are all innocent in themselves, they may be sanctified to divine purposes, and afford double satisfaction, if God be amongst them: But if God be absent, if he hide his face, or frown upon the soul, not palaces, nor groves, nor fields, not business nor diversions, not all the flowery or tasteful blessings of spring or summer, not the more refined joys of books and learning, and elegant company, not all the rich provisions of nature or art, can entertain or refresh, can satisfy or please the soul of a christian, who is smitten with the love of his God.

I add further, if the affectionate christian find not God even in his church and ordinances; if his mind be not raised to heavenly objects in the house of God, and in his sacred institutions, they are all empty and unsatisfying; there is no life nor pleasure in them: A hypocrite is content with outward forms, and is well pleased with having paid his devoirs, and made his appearance in the church; but the heart that loves God sincerely, cannot be satisfied with mere bodily devotion, nor with any pictures, shadows or emblems of divine things, unless God who is the life, the spirit, and the substance be there, and manifest himself in a way of mercy; unless God fill his own institution with his own presence, that is, with the influences of his grace, with the enlightening, the sanctifying, and the comforting operations of his own Spirit.

VI. The love of God prevailing in the heart, will awaken zeal and activity, and holy delight, not only in the duties of worship, but in all manner of services for God in the world. Can I do any thing for God whom I love? saith the christian, That shall be my joyful work. There is no labour or fatigue too much to sustain, no suffering too hard to endure, for the sake of God, who is so supremely beloved. What shall I do to honour the King of heaven, and to render him honourable in the earth? How shall I spread his glory before the eyes of men, who in himself is so transcendently glorious? and *what shall I render to the Lord my God, for the multitude of mercies* which he has conferred upon me? *Psalm* cxvi. 13. Divine love will make the law of God delightful in the practice of it, and none of his precepts will be a burden to the affectionate and lively christian; 1 *John* v. 3. *This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous.*

The soul that loves God will be always aspiring after greater degrees of holiness, because it renders the man more like God: It is commonly said of friendship or sincere love, that it either finds or makes persons like to each other. Love to God is an assimilating principle, it works more and more, till we are transformed by degrees into his image: And if we are affectionate lovers of God, we shall never be perfectly pleased with ourselves, till we are delivered from the bondage of this sinful flesh, till we awake out of this dull and stupid state, into the world of spirits made perfect, and are there satisfied with the likeness of God. This heavenly delight shall be yet more exalted, when our bodies shall be raised in the likeness of our glorified Redeemer, and our flesh and soul together shall be made to resemble the holy Jesus in greater perfection, who is the first and the nearest image of God. With what a gust of sacred pleasure does the beloved disciple express himself; 1 *John* iii. 1, 2. *We shall be like him*, when *we shall see him as he is;* and when with David we awake out of the dust of death, we shall see the face of God in righteousness, and be satisfied with his complete likeness; *Psalm* xvii. 15.

VII. Every thing that offends or dishonours the blessed God, will be a matter of hatred and aversion to the divine lover: And every thing whereby God has been offended in time past, will be the occasion of shame and grief. *I hate vain thoughts*, saith holy David, *but thy law do I love;* Psalm cxix. 113. Sin is the object of constant hatred in all its views, because it is contrary to the nature, the will, and the law of God, who is the supreme object of love: The good man is exceeding fearful of doing any thing that may offend or displease his God. When his soul looks back upon his own sins, he finds abundant matter for sorrow and holy shame, for self-resentment and pious indignation. "O how hateful have all my sinful thoughts been! My proud, my angry, and my revengeful thoughts! That covetousness, that malice and envy, which have been working in my heart! Those wandering imaginations which have called me away from the blessed God, even from the midst of his worship! How vile and guilty is my tongue, because of the foolish and passionate, and sinful words that I have spoken! What a multitude of evil actions have been scattered up and down throughout my life, and intermixed with my behaviour towards God and man!" All these create bitter uneasiness and pain in the remembrance, because they are offences against a God who is supremely beloved. What holy confusion, what meltings of heart in secret sorrow, do the true lovers of God feel, after they have indulged temptation, fallen under some more grievous sin, defiled their consciences, and dishonoured their God? What pangs of inward remorse, and what sincere indignation against themselves? And as an evidence of their love to God, they sometimes see reason to confess and bewail their folly, even in the sight of men. Holy David was not backward upon such occasions, to confess his grief for having offended his God: We may read the mournings of his love, in his penitential Psalms, particularly *Psalm* li. 3, 4, 17. and he offers *a broken and a contrite heart* in sacrifice, to that God whom he had offended.

A true and affectionate lover of God is pained at the heart, and feels a sensible inward sorrow to see how iniquity abounds in the land, to behold the laws of God broken by his fellow-creatures, and his holy name blasphemed. *I beheld the transgressors, and I was grieved, because they kept not thy word: Rivers of tears run down my eyes*, because men break thy holy law; *Psalm* cxix. 136, 158.

VIII. Every thing that has a tendency to divide the soul from God is matter of religious jealousy and holy fear. Divine love hath its jealousies: If we love God with intense affection we shall feel an inward anxiousness and solicitude, lest our hearts *depart from the living God*, and lest God should hide himself in his displeasure from our souls. This is what holy David is ever afraid of, and begs that God would not hide himself in anger. The apostle Jude, verse 21. bids us *keep ourselves in the love of God:* The holy soul will watch against every thing that may begin a separation or break the divine friendship, and it grows jealous of every thing that comes too near the heart.

When the true lover of God is deeply engaged in the businesses of the present world, he manages them with a pious caution, lest his soul should be immersed and drowned with overwhelming cares, or overladen with increasing riches; he is watchful, and afraid lest the dust and rubbish of this world should bury the holy seed in the heart, should obstruct the growth of religion, should carry off the thoughts from God to idols of gold and silver, and thus defile the soul. If he has any share amongst the honours and equipages, the gay diversions and pleasures of life, he is afraid lest they should fill his heart with vanity, lest they should tincture his spirit with sensuality and intemperance, and

thus take away the taste and relish of divine love. If Providence call him sometimes into vain and wicked company, he is afraid of tarrying too many hours in the midst of them, lest *evil communications should corrupt good manners;* 1 Cor. xv. 33. and therefore *he will not stand among the counsels of the ungodly*, nor walk in the way where sinners dwell; *Psalm* i. 1. He shuns them as a pestilence, because their ways are contrary to the pure and holy nature of that God whom he loves.

Those studies, those employments, those recreations and amusements, which make the heart forget God, or withhold it too long from him, are uneasy and painful to a soul inflamed with divine love. As it is the language of the sinner who is weary of God, *When will the new moon be over, and the sabbath be done*, that I may return to my trade and my labour, to my buying and selling, and the daily business of this dying life? So the sincere lover of God is ready to say, What, nothing but business and labour for *the bread that perisheth?* Nothing but buying and selling, and seeking gold and silver, food and raiment? Alas, how unhappily am I detained all the day from my God by these embarrassments! When will the evening come, and the season of pious retirement? When will the sabbath appear, that I may spend my hours with God, and begin to try what heaven is!

IX. Where the divine principle of the love of God reigns in the heart, all sinful passions toward God and men will be subdued by it.

1. Toward God. One would think indeed, that man should not dare to indulge any sinful passion towards his Maker; but so corrupt are our hearts, that we dislike the holy nature of God, we are displeased with his will, and his holy commandments are grievous to us, till the love of God subdue this inward aversion of the heart to holiness, and reconcile us to the law of God by the constraining influence of divine love.

Again, we are ready to repine at the hand of the Lord, to murmur against heaven, and to quarrel with our Maker, when we meet with disappointments in our affairs: We are inclined to grow peevish and fretful against Providence, when we lose some desirable comfort, or sustain some heavy sorrow, or long and tiresome sickness; but holy love silences every murmur, and quashes every repining thought. Where the love of God prevails, afflictive scenes of life will never awaken resentment against heaven, but always meet with patient submission. The sacred lover is not angry with his God when he smites him, for he ever supposes there is a just reason for every stroke of his Father's rod: "Either," says he, "my sins have deserved his correcting hand, or these sorrows are sent to examine what grace there is in my heart, and to make trial of my faith: Still I am persuaded there is love at the bottom of all these troubles, and it is the hand of love that smites me; for my Saviour hath said it. Rev. iii. 19. *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten;* and the holy apostle assures us, *Heb.* xii. 6. that *God corrects every son whom he receives.*

2. Divine love mortifies and subdues our disorderly and sinful passions toward our fellow-creatures: Wrath, revenge, malice, envy, are all subdued and kept under by this sovereign principle of divine love. That soul, in whom this sacred passion keeps a constant flame, is not easily roused to a wrathful or resenting temper, by the affronts and injuries we sustain from men. The lover of God is meek and gentle under many insults and reproaches: He can forbear and forgive, for he knows that his God hath borne long with him, and forgiven him ten thousand provocations. Thus the sovereignty of divine love appears, in that it can suppress as well as raise the other passions.

X. Where divine love reigns in eminent degrees, there will be an humble, holy desire to pass even through death itself to meet with God, the supreme object of love, and to dwell for ever in his presence. If faith be not too feeble, or the frailties of animal nature too prevalent, the divine lover will encounter death with courage, and with sacred joy, because it will bring him to the enjoyment of his God. When *the dust returns to earth, the soul* of every man *returns to God* as a judge, and the soul of a good man to God as a friend, and Father, and rewarder; *Eccles.* xii. 7. If we are *absent from the body*, we shall be *present with the Lord;* 2 Cor. v. 8. In this view of things, the holy lover is ready to say, What is there in death so terrible, that the presence of Christ, and the enjoyment of my God, has not something infinitely more delightful to overbalance it? *Love is stronger than death.*

The love of God has been found stronger in a holy soul than all the pangs and terrors of death, even a death of violence and martyrdom: The one influences and impels toward heaven more powerfully than the other can terrify or discourage: United faith and love have passed through fires of torment, and seas of blood, in order to see God, and dwell with him in his heavenly habitation. This leads to the next particular.

In the last place I add, that as hell will be matter of utmost aversion and holy fear to a sincere lover of God, because it is an everlasting separation from God, so heaven will be the object of desire and joyful hope, because there God manifests himself to all that love him in his highest glory and his richest grace. The soul that loves God with warm affection, cannot bear those dreadful words, 2 *Thess.* i. 9. of being *punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.* To be *without God in the world*, during the short space of our continuance here, is a very formidable and grievous thing to the good man; but to be cursed and condemned to depart from God for ever, this is the very hell of hell, if I may so express it, in the esteem of the soul that loves God: To be divided for ever from God, the spring of life and love, and all happiness; to be separated for ever from God, the infinite and the all-sufficient good; to be thrust out for ever from the presence of God, the most lovely and the best of beings; to see him no more, to love him no more, and to be for ever banished from his love; the very thought of it gives the holy soul more anguish than it is able to bear.

On the other hand, heaven, which is the dwelling-place of the Most High, is the mark which the good man ever aims at, that he may see God face to face. When his love rises high, he is ever breathing passionately after this blessedness, and lives with delight upon the promises which give him this joyful hope. *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;* Matt. v. 8. The good man's affections are *set on* the *things above, where Christ is at the right hand of God;* Col. iii. 1, 2. His *treasure is* on high, and his *heart is there also;* Matt. vi. 21. If we love God with all the heart, we shall keep heaven always in our eye. The foretaste of it will be our present comfort and support; the thoughts of being for ever with God, will sweeten all the sorrows of life, will take away the bitterness of affliction, and ease the pains of death. As Jacob cheerfully sustained a hard servitude of seven years in Chaldea, through heat and cold, through frosts and wind, and sunbeams, for the love of Rachel, so the christian endures all the labours and conflicts, all the fatigues and distresses of life in this lower world with patience, and with holy pleasure, in hope to dwell for ever with God, whom his soul loves supremely above all creatures.

Thus I have finished the second general head which I proposed; and produced a

variety of instances, wherein this sacred and sovereign affection of divine love commands and influences, excites or subdues the other passions of nature, and makes them all subservient to its own great designs, that is, to the honour and to the enjoyment of God, the object of this divine affection.

Here this Discourse may be divided.

Before I proceed to the third general head, I shall endeavour to improve this discourse by these three useful reflections:

Reflection I. "How happy and easy a rule is here given us to examine how stands our love to God, and whether we love him *with all our heart!*" Are the other passions of nature influenced by this love? Surely it is impossible for us, in this present state of flesh and blood, to love God with our whole hearts, and yet to feel no sensible workings of fear or hope, desire or anger, in correspondence with this holy passion: To have no pleasures nor sorrows, no holy longings, nor holy joys, acting in concert with this principle of divine love.

Believe me, sirs, there are no outward actions, no visible attendances on public worship, no bodily services, no costly sacrifices can so happily evidence our sincere love to God, as the steady and constant workings of the other inward powers of nature, in conformity to this holy principle. A hundred outward plausible actions may be the cloak of vice, the disguise of hypocrisy. Vain Pharisees may *make broad their phylacteries, may tithe* their herds and their flocks as well as *mint and cummin*, may give much alms, or build hospitals and churches; but the various inward affections of nature can never be kept in any regular and steady exercise of piety, by all the toil and skill of a hypocrite. And on the other hand, if the heart be thoroughly devoted to the love of God, this love will reign sovereign among the other passions. The other passions will obey love, and we may judge by their obedience, how far the love of God prevails.

Reflection II. "If mankind be examined by this rule, how few sincere lovers of God will be found among them!" It is a vain thing for a man to say, "I love God with all my heart," when his strongest desires and his most relishing joys centre in meaner objects; when his highest hopes and his most painful fears, his deepest anxieties and disquietudes of mind, are always raised and sunk again by the things of this world only, and the changing scenes of this mortal state. Alas! how few are there whose love to God does not fall under some just suspicion, when brought to this test! Let us survey the world round about us, and observe what it is that influences the various passions of men, even those who are called christians, and would be thought the disciples of Christ.

Some have their hearts so filled with the business of this life, and the love of money, as their chief idol, that all their desires, their fears, and their hopes, and the perpetual course and labour of all their powers, keep this point ever in view and in warm pursuit: The disappointment of a small sum, the loss of a few pounds, will hang upon their spirits with a constant heaviness, and create them more pain than twenty sins against God their Maker. What shall we think of these people, who love riches so well, that if their hands and their heads would hold out, and daylight would last, they would never be weary of this chace, nor require cessation or respite. Does the love of God appear as the supreme and reigning passion in such earthly souls as these? There have been some in all ages, and there are the successors of them in our day, who have loved gold and silver

with so warm a passion, even to the very end of life, that if they could but have contrived how to carry it away with them to the other world, there would have been but little silver, and scarce any gold left in our world long ere this time. This has employed their morning thoughts and evening affections, their earnest wishes, and their busy fingers day and night, so as to leave little room for the love of God and religion.

Others there are who make honour and esteem, or perhaps the grandeur and pomp, and equipage of life, the chief object of their love. Their hopes and cares, their desires and enquiries are, how shall I shine among men, and make a figure in the world? Every gay gilded thing they see raises their wishes: Ambition, honour, and applause, engage their whole souls: A fancied contempt or neglect of them stirs their jealousy, and awakens all their uneasy passions. They mourn more, and are more inwardly and deeply vexed for one reproachful word from men, than for all their own affronts to the great and blessed God. Can the love of God reign in a heart so puffed up and filled with self and vanity?

There are others again, whose idol is pleasure and vain delight. A round of pleasing amusements, a succession of sensualities, is their chief good: This employs their constant contrivances, this engages their hopes and fears, and every passion. They spend their anxious enquiries upon the gratification of appetite, humour, and fancy: *What shall I eat, and what shall I drink?* How shall I dine elegantly, and regale myself at the table? What are the most luxurious dishes in season, and where shall I find gay or merry company in the evening? The tavern or the meaner drinking-house, the comedy or the ball, and every place of pastime, whether lawful or unlawful, detain their souls as well as their bodies, and engage their thoughts long beforehand. Does the sincere love of God reign in such sort of spirits?

These are the things that busy and engross the daily passions of men, and scarce a small corner of their hearts is left for God and religion. But let us remember, God is an all-glorious and sovereign Being, his holy jealousy forbids him to accept of a corner of the heart. He refuses and disdains every lover that does not give up his whole self to him with all his powers. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul:* Every affection must and will be employed in a pious manner, where divine love is, as it always ought to be, the supreme passion. But, alas! how few souls are thus moulded and refined; how few are regulated and governed by so divine a principle! Man is the creature of God, and owes his all to him; but the creature man does not love his Creator.

Reflection III. If divine love be so sovereign and ruling an affection, then "the best and noblest method for governing all the passions, is to get the love of God rooted in the heart, and to see that it maintain its supreme dominion there." What uneasy creatures are we made by our various passions! How often do they disquiet and torment the soul! How headstrong is their violence, like a horse unbroken and untamed! How sudden are their starts! Their motions how wild and various! And how unruly are their efforts! Now if one had but one sovereign bridle, that could reach and manage them all; one golden rein, that would hold in all their unruly motions, and would also excite and guide them at pleasure; what an invaluable instrument would this be to mortals! Surely such an instrument is the love of God, such an invaluable regulator of all the passionate powers; and it will have this effect, where it is strong and supreme, as it ought to be.

You that are daily disturbed and led astray by rising passions of various kinds, come to the lectures of the gospel, come to the doctrine of the blessed Jesus: Come, see the love of God displayed in its most surprising and powerful colours; come, learn to love your Maker, dressed in the riches of his grace: And may your souls be fired with divine love, till all your carnal fetters are melted off; till you exult in a divine liberty; till you lead captivity captive, and reign and triumph over all your vicious affections, which had so often before disquieted and enslaved you.

And here again we may take up a melancholy complaint, how few are there who are taught to regulate their passions by divine love! What wild work do these unruly powers make among mankind! How dreadfully do they carry away multitudes into mischief and ruin for want of this holy government! How very few have attained this heavenly gift, this sacred principle, this golden rein of universal influence, that would hold in, and guide and manage all the passions to glorious advantage!

Meditation. "But it is time now, O my soul, to call thy thoughts away from the multitudes of mankind, and to look carefully into thyself. There is reason enough for grief and lamentation indeed, if we survey the thousands round about us, who are mere slaves to their earthly passions, who let them loose among creatures, and shew very few tokens and evidences of a supreme love to their Creator: But would it not be matter of far more painful, more penetrating and inward sorrow, if thou shouldst carry this evidence, this test of divine love, into thy own retirements, and shouldst hardly be able to prove thyself a lover of God? Awake, awake to the work, O my heart! Enquire, examine, and take a strict account how are thy passionate powers employed. Go over thy various affections, and enquire of all of them, how stands thy love to God?

"Admiration is described as the first of the passions: It arises on the notice of something new, or rare and uncommon: But it never ceases nor is lost in the contemplation of God, whose glories are infinite, and in whom the holy soul always finds something new and wondrous. He is a rare and uncommon object indeed, for there is but one such being in heaven and earth; there never was but one from all eternal ages past, nor ever will be but one to all future eternal ages.

"Hast thou seen him, my soul, so as to love him? then thy work of pleasing contemplation and wonder will be still renewed: Among creatures we go on to admire what we love, but the love of the Creator will lead us to everlasting admiration. And if thou lovest him, thou wilt ever find something new and wondrous in him, as thy knowledge of him increases. Ask thyself, then, hast thou seen the glories and the graces of thy God, so as to wonder at the infinite variety of his wisdom, the greatness of his majesty, and the condescensions of his mercy? Are his displays of glory in nature and providence, in the Bible and in the church, and especially in his beloved Son Jesus, the matter of thy joyful meditation and high esteem? Does a sense of his transcendent grandeur and goodness strike thee, as it becomes a creature to be stricken with the ideas of a God, that is, with a holy veneration, and with an awful delight? The love of so sublime and infinite a Being is naturally turned to pleasing adoration, and becomes an act of noble worship: But when earthly lovers adore their meaner objects, to express the strength of their love, they turn idolaters, and affront God their Maker. Remember, O my soul, God alone must be adored.

"But proceed now, and ask, how stand thy desires and wishes? Is the favour, the presence, and the enjoyment of God, the object of thy strongest desires, and of thy con-

stant pursuit? Dost thou long after a sense of the pardon of sin, the love of God, and a preparation to dwell for ever with him, above all things besides? Yet further enquire, what is thy heart's chief delight: Are those the swsetest seasons of life, when thou art brought nearest to God in the temper of thy spirit, in the lively hope of his love, and in humble converse with him? Are the secret hours of retirement dear and delightful to thee, above all human society? Are the workings of thy heart, in warm and affectionate devotion, thy sweetest pleasures? Can it be that ever I should love God supremely, and yet not find my converse with him to be my supreme joy?

"Again: Are the things that relate to God and eternity the objects of my choice and love, above and beyond the things that relate to men and this life? What value hast thou, O my soul, for the Bible, the book of God? His words will be treasured up in the heart, and will become the sweet entertainment of thy solitary hours, if God himself has the highest room in thy affections. Let me enquire again, how stand my desires toward the sanctuary, toward the places and seasons of divine worship? "Am *I glad* when they *say unto me, come, let us go up to the house of God?*" Psalm cxxii. 1. Are the courts of Zion my delight, because the blessed God manifests his power and glory there? Do I love the saints of God? Is the company of lively christians refreshing and entertaining to me, above all the idle discourse of the world, or the vain merriments or more polite amusements of the age? Do I look upon the children of God with a peculiar respect, with an eye of distinguishing love, and that for this reason, because they stand related to God, and bear his image? Do I feel a sympathy with them in their sorrows? Do I pity and relieve from my very heart the poor in this world, who are the sons and daughters of the most high God? And is Jesus the supreme Son of God, the highest in my esteem, and the dearest to my heart?

"Ask yet again, O my soul; is every thing little and contemptible in thy eyes, in comparison of the things of God? Can any thing fill up the room and place of God? Or canst thou say all things are emptiness and vanity where God is not? When St. Austin, who was exceeding fond of the writings of Cicero, the Roman orator, came to taste the pleasures of religion, by the knowledge of Christ, the writings even of Cicero lost their relish with him, because he found not Christ there. How stands it now with thee, in respect of some of thy dearest delights of nature? Are they all placed, as they ought to be, in thy esteem, infinitely below God? Are thy best earthly joys empty and unsatisfying without God? Canst thou say, in the language of the apostle, and assume his triumph, *Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus*, by whom we are brought near to God the Father? *Phil.* iii. 8.

"Enquire yet again, does thy love to God awaken and employ thy zeal and holy activity for his honour? Art thou solicitous to keep all his commandments, and hereby manifest thy love? There is no evidence of the love of God can be sufficient or sincere, if this be wanting. Dost thou seek to grow more and more like to God? Dost thou breathe earnestly after greater conformity to Jesus, the first and the brightest image of the Father? Is it a pain to thee to find thyself so unlike him, whom thou lovest supremely? Love will create likeness.

"Let us examine thee now, my heart, how stand thy uneasy and painful affections? Hast thou a rooted hatred of every sin? Hast thou an inward aversion to every thing that displeases God? Dost thou look back on thy own former transgressions with holy shame and sincere sorrow? Art thou covered with an inward blush at the recollection of thy

past follies? Are thy sins thy heaviest burden, and the most uneasy load? Has thy sincere and unfeigned repentance been manifested by all the proper passions that attend a penitent, by self-abasement and inward confusion, by mourning in secret, and a holy displicency and resentment against thyself and thy folly? And is it a grief and pain to thee, to see and hear others transgress against thy God, and affront his law and his love?

"Seek yet further: Hast thou a watchful jealousy over thyself, lest thou wander from God? A constant solicitude of mind, lest thou offend and displease him whom thou lovest supremely? Dost thou stand afar off from every temptation, as one afraid to be defiled with sin, and dishonour thy God? Art thou cautious of that company, of that business, of that diversion or delight which has before ensnared thee, and broke thy holy intercourse with God?

"Ask again, O my heart, hast thou subdued thy uneasy passions of anger, frowardness, and resentment, against God and against man, by the overcoming influence of divine love? Hast thou a submissive and humble carriage under hard providences and sore disappointments from the hand of God? Dost thou love him so well, as not to murmur at his holy conduct, nor quarrel with his government? And hast thou acquired the sacred power and skill of suppressing thy wrath and revenge against men, by the constraining influence of the love of God? Dost thou forbear and forgive those who offend thee, from a sweet sense of the forbearing and forgiving love of God towards thee? If thy love to God has yet done little of this service, if it has not begun to make thee meek and mild, and dispassionate under afflictions from the hand of God, or the affronts of men, it has not acquired any great prevalence in thee, and there is too much reason to suspect the sincerity of it.

"Come yet further, O my soul, take a step forward, and look towards death and eternity. Art thou willing to cross the dark valley, in order to dwell with thy beloved? I grant nature has its frailties and fears; I grant also, that the want of assurance of salvation damps the wings of the soul, which would be stretched forward to the enjoyment of God in the heavenly country: I would put the question, therefore, in a gentle and favourable manner: Hast thou any desire to leave this sinful world, to quit all thy dearest hopes and interests here, for the sake of dwelling with God on high? Suppose thou hadst a steady hope of his love, and the pains of death were mitigated, hast thou an inward breathing and tendency towards the happiness that arises from the presence of God? O blessed souls, whose love is risen to so transcendent a degree, that they are not afraid even of the sharpest pangs, and the terrors of death! They can venture with pleasure to cross *the swellings of Jordan*, that they may enter into the promised land, and dwell in the city of their God.

"What is it, O my heart, what is it in the word hell that strikes thee with so much horror? Is it the thought of an endless separation from thy God? What is it that makes the name of heaven carry so pleasing a sound? Is it because thy God dwells there in his fairest glory, and in his richest grace? The mere dread of hell as a place of sorrow and pain, and the desire of heaven as a mere state of rest from trouble, and of some sort of unknown happiness, are no manner of evidences of any love to God, much less of a supreme love, such as God requires. The passions of nature may be awakened by natural self-love at the views of heaven and hell, when set merely in this light: But it is the hope of being *for ever with the Lord*, that is the chief allurement of heaven in the

eye of the sacred lover; and it is the eternal absence of God gives hell its blackest colours, and its most formidable appearances.

" Hast thou, O my soul, run over all thy passions in this enquiry? and what is the result of thy labour? Canst thou stand this test? Art thou a lover of God with all thy heart? If thou find this divine principle, this sovereign and holy affection reigning within thee, bless the distinguishing grace of God, who has kindled this heavenly flame, and cherish it with perpetual care. Set a guard upon every affection, lest it wander from its duty. O may divine love maintain its rightful dominion, and universal sovereignty in my soul. Let me keep God always near me, and watch against the seducing influence of tempting creatures, that I may ever preserve the love of God in its supreme fervency, and its unrivalled influences: Then my whole nature, with all its powers, shall be thine, O my God, for ever and ever." *Amen.*

DISCOURSE III.

THE USE OF THE PASSIONS IN RELIGION.

WE have seen already what is included in "loving God with the heart, and how this divine love will influence all the other affections into a suitable and correspondent exercise." We proceed now to the third general head of discourse, and that is, to shew the use of the passions in religion, or what advantage may be obtained by them, or expected from them in the christian life: And here we shall find the advantages of them so great and numerous, as will render it necessary for every one who professes serious religion, to have the affections of his soul engaged in it.

Advantage I. "The passions being duly awakened, will set the powers of the understanding at work, in the search of divine truth and religious duty, and render the knowledge of God exceeding desirable to sinful men." We are by nature thoughtless of God and divine things: A little, a very little general knowledge of religion satisfies our desires, because we imagine it is sufficient for our necessities. The bulk of mankind have their passions touched with earthly things, and they are ever enquiring who will shew us where corn and wine, the pleasures of sense, the possessions of this world, honours or preferments, are to be gotten? Too many are ready to join with the profane wretches, who are described in Job xxi. 14. *They say unto God, depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways;* we do not want to know much of God, nor what is our duty to him.

But when the arrows of conviction strike through the soul, when the heart is awakened to a pathetic sense of sin, and the fear of divine vengeance possesses and torments the spirit, then it is the most importunate enquiry of the heart and the lips, *What shall we do to be saved?* Acts xvi. 30. How shall we escape the wrath to come? How is the governing justice of the great God to be satisfied for our offences? What is the way to be made partakers of his pardoning mercy? *Wherewith shall I appear before the Lord, and* in what manner shall *I bow myself,* and worship *the Most High God?* Micah vi. 6. This was the language of the awakened jailer, who had just before scourged the saints of the Lord, the holy apostles; *Acts* xvi. 30. This was the earnest cry of the crucifiers of Christ himself, at St. Peter's sermon, when *they were pricked to their hearts;* Acts ii. 37. This is the language of nature convinced of sin, and the danger of divine indignation. St. Paul learned all the terrors of the Lord, and felt all his painful passions in an uproar, when he was struck down to the dust, with the dreadful and overwhelming glory in his way to Damascus; *Acts* ix. 3. And with what intense and hasty zeal did he make this enquiry, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* verse 6. And when he had learned the knowledge of Christ, as the only way to the favour of God and salvation, how highly doth he value it! Phil. iii. 8. *Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord.*

If I am awakened to a sense of sin, and fear the anger of God, I shall long to know the awful extent of his power, and the terrible effects of his anger, as well as the methods

of obtaining his grace. If I love him, I shall spend many pleasant hours of enquiry into his amiable excellencies. Each pious passion will promote its peculiar enquiries. Fear and love will wander with holy awe and delight among his glories, and be ever pursuing further knowledge of his perfections: If I love God with warm and devout affection, I shall rejoice daily to find new discoveries of his unsearchable wisdom, his all-sufficient power, his immense goodness, and the unbounded riches of his grace: I shall trace his wondrous footsteps through this beautiful creation, and endeavour to find his way in the tract of daily providences: I shall survey him and his attributes in his book of grace, and dwell upon his divine features in Jesus the *image*, and *the brightness of his glory;* Heb. i. 3. and I shall search further continually into the knowledge of Christ, who is *God manifest in the flesh:* I shall dig in the mines of scripture for treasures of divine knowledge, and never grow weary of the work. I shall be always enquiring, "What I shall do to please and serve him," who is the object of my highest love; and how I shall obtain stronger sensations and assurances of his favour, and dwell for ever in his presence, who is the life and the joy of my soul. We long still to know more of this transcendent Being whom we love: It is this divine passion that animates these enquiries after the knowledge of God; and this shall render them infinite and everlasting, because God the object of them is everlasting and infinite.

II. "The affections being once engaged, will keep the soul fixed to divine things. The sense of them is impressed deeper on the mind, by the exercise of devout passions, and it will abide there much longer." Even where reason is bright, and the judgment clear, yet it will be ineffectual for any valuable purposes, if religion reach no farther than the head, and proceed not to the heart: It will have but little influence, if there are none of the affections engaged. Notions of religion in the understanding, without any touch upon the passions, have been compared to the stars in a winter midnight, bright and shining, but very cold; or rather to the meteor which is called a shooting-star, which vanishes quickly, and is lost in darkness.

Suppose we are convinced by calm reasoning of the being of a God, of the duties which we owe our Creator, of his government of the world, and of his final judgment; suppose we are led into a demonstration or evident proof, that we are guilty creatures, having broken the laws of God, and that there is no salvation for us, but in and by a Mediator; suppose we are really convinced in our judgment, that there is a heaven or a hell that awaits our departure from this world; that we must die shortly, and that we are for ever miserable without pardoning mercy, and sanctifying grace; all this is valuable in its kind, and is necessary in order to salvation: But if all this knowledge make no impression on the affections, it is not likely to abide with us, nor to do us much good: Knowledge wears off the mind, if never used. Cold, unaffecting notions, will have no powerful influence to reform our lives. Every new scene of business or pleasure brushes off these thoughts of religion from our souls, where they have not been let into the heart, nor possessed the passions: They vanish like *the morning dew, or like an early cloud that passes away;* Hosea vi. 4.

It is one great end and design of the passions, to fix the attention strongly upon the objects of them, to settle the thoughts with such intenseness and continuance on that which raises them, that they are not easily taken off. What we fear or desire, what we love and hope for, what we lament or rejoice in, will seize and busy our minds, and

take them up perpetually, notwithstanding the importunities of other businesses or cares: The passions are supremely importunate, and will be heard. Now if the passions are strongly engaged for God, the world will have but little power to call off the heart from religion.

Suppose two preachers were desired to minister to the same auditory, on a day of fasting or praise, and on the same subject too. One of them has all the beauty, force, and skill of clear and calm reasoning; the other not only instructs well, but powerfully moves the affections with sacred oratory: Which of these two will best secure the attention of the people, and guard them from drowsiness or wandering? Surely he that touches the heart will fix the eyes and the ears and all the powers; while he that merely endeavours to inform the head, will find many wandering eyes, and some sleepers.

Suppose two persons have heard the same discourse from the pulpit, which was both rational and pathetic. One of them is pleased with the fine reasoning of the preacher, and hath his judgment convinced of the necessity and importance of the duty which he is exhorted to practise, and goes no further; the other hath also felt the very same conviction of his understanding by force of argument, and at the same time finds his soul touched inwardly with an emotion of the lively passions; he is awakened and surprised with an awful concern about his past neglects, and a holy fear of divine anger; he is struck to the heart with sentiments of piety, he is grieved and ashamed at his folly, he is filled with zeal and holy purposes: Pray which of these two will have the discourse dwell most upon their hearts; which is like to remember this sermon longest, and which is most likely to put it in practice? This leads me to the third particular.

III. "All the duties of holiness are rendered much easier, and temptations to sin much weaker, when religion hath taken hold of the heart, and the passions of the soul are engaged in it." Passion animates all the inferior powers of nature, and strengthens them all in their operation. It is a sort of life and fire within the hearts of men, which God the Creator hath ordained to be ever ready there, to give force and spirit for present action. He knew our nature wanted this spur, this inward spring of activity.

Suppose we had been left merely to the exercise of our reason and judgment, to inform us when it was proper to eat and drink, without having any such appetites as thirst and hunger: It is possible indeed that life might have been maintained, but we should have been often ready to neglect the proper seasons of food, and nature would have been supported but in a feeble and languishing manner, without such regular and constant nourishment as we want, and that too without any sensible delight. But the keen appetites of hunger and thirst are implanted in our very natures, to awaken us to take our solid and liquid food, and that with constancy and natural pleasure. It is for the same end, that all the passions were wrought into our constitution by our great Creator, that we might have some more vigorous principles than the mere power of reasoning, to animate us to activity on all just and proper occasions.

Suppose I were told that my house was a-fire at midnight, and my cold reason informed me, that in a little time I and my goods might be consumed, it is probable I should think of using some method to save myself: But the passion of surprize and fear exerts itself in a moment, and hurries me out to make an immediate escape. Fear was wrought into human nature for such purposes as these. In such a fright we can almost move mountains, and perform wonders, to the utmost limits of the strength of man, in order to

save ourselves or our dear relatives from the flames. Cold reasoning without passion, would have no such sovereign and powerful effects.

Thus it is in things of religion. A cold information that misery will be the consequent of sin, or even a rational conviction of the distant danger of hell, without the passion of fear, would never animate the man to cry out with such importunate enquiries, "What shall I do to escape *everlasting burnings?*" It is this passion of fear that constrains him to fly for his life to *the hope that is set before him in the gospel*, and to make his escape as Lot did from Sodom, without *looking back* on the allurements of sin.

I might give instances of the like kind in the affection of divine love. I may learn by reason that God is to be honoured and obeyed, because he is my Creator and my Lord: I may be convinced of the beauty of virtue, and the excellency of religion, and that all the precepts of it are reasonable; yet these precepts will carry but a feeble sway with them, and have a very imperfect influence on my practice, in opposition to all my carnal interests and corrupt inclinations, if I have nothing to move me but the mere use of my reason, telling me it is a proper thing to obey the great God. This will not do the work, if I have no affectionate love to God as a Father and a Saviour. It is a knowledge and belief of the truth of the gospel, joined with love to Christ my Redeemer, that makes me zealous to fulfil every duty. Christianity itself is thus excellently described by the apostle; it is *faith working by love;* Gal. v. 6. A mere knowledge of any person will not make us grow like him, but love hath an assimilating and transforming power: The divine affection of love will work perpetually within us, and never cease till it has made us like our beloved object, till it has made us holy as God is holy, and formed heaven within us.

And when this warm love to God our Maker, and to Jesus our Saviour, is joined to a lively hope of everlasting happiness, how do these united passions invigorate the soul in duty, and bear down all temptations before them? Great is the constraining power of these divine affections, hope and love: They break through all obstacles that stand in the way of salvation: When they are united together they arise to holy joy; and among the saints of the Old Testament, as well as the New, *the joy of the Lord was their strength* to fulfil all the duties of religion and righteousness; *Nehem.* viii. 10. This sacred temper of mind carried out the patriarchs of old, and the heroes of the ancient church, to obey the call of God with courage, to leave their own native country and their friends, to wander through the earth as *strangers and pilgrims*, and to live upon a naked promise: This taught Moses *to esteem the reproach of Christ*, and the hope of the Messiah, *greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt:* This enabled the pious Jews to work wonders of righteousness, to venture into the dens of lions, to dare *the edge of the sword*, and combat *the violence of fire;* to endure the trial of *cruel mockings and scourgings*, to pass through showers of stones, and engines of torture, despising death in its most frightful forms, and *not accepting deliverance.* These are the wonders which are ascribed to faith in the eleventh chapter to the Hebrews: But it was faith animated by divine love; it was faith rising high in the hope of *a better resurrection.* A naked and simple belief of things unseen would scarce have wrought these amazing effects in human nature, without some warm and joyful efforts of the affections of hope and love.

Behold the hero of the gospel, St. Paul, that little contemptible figure of a man bearing down all opposition before him in his sacred course of zeal and duty. Under

this influence he can triumph over all the formidable things of nature, and the terrors of this world; Rom. viii. 35. *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?* Who shall divide our hearts from him? Who shall make us weary of his service, or tempt us away from the faith and obedience of his gospel? *Shall tribulation,* shall *distress,* shall *persecution,* shall *famine or nakedness, or peril or sword?* As it was *written* of the saints in former ages, so shall it be fulfilled again in our age, *for thy sake* we can bear killing *all the day long;* the sheep of Christ can stand the axe, or the knife of slaughter: *In all these things we are more than conquerors, through* the grace of Christ *that* hath *loved us.* Every holy martyr hath made it appear, *that love is stronger than* prisons, or *death:* It hath its flames that are superior to common fire, and can overcome all the terrors of men.

When this divine love and hope have possessed the spirit, what poor and paltry things are all the allurements of flesh and sense? How feeble and insufficient are all the gay and glittering appearances of nature in this world, all the flatteries of pride and sensuality, to draw the heart away from God? The holy soul can boldly withstand all the enticements of sin, when divine grace hath seized the affections, and got possession of those sprightly and active powers. What the nerves and spirits are to animal nature, the same thing are the passions to the soul: They are its very nerves and spirits, its most vigorous and unwearied springs of action, both in the zealous discharge of every duty, and the firm resistance of every temptation to sin. These active springs set all nature at work in the affairs of grace.

The sanctified affections are so great a part of the new creature, that the very graces of the Holy Spirit are called by their names. What is divine love, religious fear, and heavenly hope? What is a sacred contempt and disdain of sensual vanities, and an immortal aversion to sin, and utter abhorrence of it? What are holy desires, penitent sorrows, and spiritual joys? What is all this blessed catalogue of the fruits of the Spirit, but the passions of nature refined and renewed by grace.

It is the influence of religion on the passions, that doth in a great measure make the difference between the true christian and the mere outward professor: The mere professor may know as much of the doctrines of religion, and of the duties of it, as the most religious man; but he doth not fear and love, and desire and hope, and mourn and rejoice, as the true christian doth. If a bare rational knowledge of divine things were sufficient to make a true disciple of Christ, the greatest student in divinity, and especially the sharpest critic in scripture, would be the best christian: But it is not always found so; critics and students, rich in knowledge, may have cold hearts, and lie dead in a state of sin.

IV. "The practices of religion are not only rendered easy, by having the affections employed in it, but they become pleasant and delightful, and every sin is more painful to the soul where the passions are engaged for God." If the christian be employed in holy meditation, how does the soul that loves God travel with delight over the various scenes of his glory, in the lower and the upper worlds! How does he dwell upon the majesty and the mercy of his heavenly Father; upon the excellencies of Christ the Saviour, upon his offices and his dignities from day to day! How pleasurably doth the mind diffuse itself in contemplation upon his pre-existent state, when he dwelt in the Father's bosom; his condescending incarnation and coming into flesh and blood, the labours and sorrows of his life, the anguish and amazing love of his death, the glory of his resurrection, the honours paid him at his ascent to the throne of God in heaven, the

efficacy of his intercession, and the joyful and dreadful appearance of the great Judge, when he shall come in the clouds of heaven *to be admired of his saints*, and to give vengeance and destruction to those who have ridiculed and rejected the gospel of his grace? How are the thoughts fixed on the sacred theme, without an inclination to rove and go astray? How are the powers of imagination devoutly employed, when the holy passions are roused into activity, when our fear, our hope, our love, our joy, are all in happy exercise? But if these are absent, and we are left merely to rational enforcements of duty on the mind, without love or affection in the heart, with what a cold indifference do we set about the work! How fluttering are our thoughts! How wandering are our hearts! And every flying fancy calls us away, and scatters our powers among a thousand vanities.

I might instance in the duty of prayer or praise, when the love of the heart flames out into holy desires, how ready and eager is the soul to seek the Lord! Not the shadows and silence of the midnight, not the early business and cares of the morning, can withhold the good man from calling upon his God. *With my soul have I desired thee in the night, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early;* Isaiah xxvi. 9. and *I prevented the dawning of the morning*, and cried to the Lord; *Psalm* cxix. 147. Or if the heart be warmed with a sense of divine mercy, and kindled into religious joy, how gloriously does the tongue break forth into praises! *Bless the Lord, O my soul? and all that is within me bless his holy name: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits;* Psalm ciii. 1, 2. *Seven times a-day will I praise thee: My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise: Awake, my tongue, my glory, awake* to the joyful work; *Psalm* lvii. 7, 8.

While the pious affections are duly engaged in prayer, even a common christian is enabled to make divine work of it: Our minds never want matter, nor our tongues expression. Sense and language are very much at the call of the devout passions, where the mind is tolerably furnished with the principles of religion; and then the soul converses with its Maker with unknown delight. But when we are impelled by a mere precept, commanding us to our knees, and conscience goads us on as it were to the task and drudgery of prayer, without any devout affection, how cold is the heart! How languid the worship! How dry the mind! How scanty the language! The invention and the lips strive and labour, and all to little purpose. In such a case, I cannot but think that well-composed forms of devotion may be useful helps to awaken the drowsy powers, and to call up sleeping religion. But where these powers are awake and lively, such helps are less needful in our praying seasons.

The same experiment may be repeated in reading the word of God. How full of sweetness and holy pleasure are the discoveries and the promises of the Bible, when devout affections are at work! How sweet are the histories of Abraham and David, the prophecies of Isaiah, and the predictions that point to Christ! How glorious the epistles of Peter and Paul! How divinely pleasing is the gospel of John, and the dying discourses and prayer of our Saviour in the xiv. xv. xvi. and xvii. chapters of this evangelist! How full of rapture and holy transport are the Psalms of David! We enter into his spirit, and we feel his divine sentiments and joys. But what a deadness, what a dryness overspreads even the most delicious and heavenly parts of those divine writings; what an insipid and tasteless thing is the gospel itself, when the holy passions are all asleep! So it is in hearing sermons: When our sacred affections are awake, we dwell on the lips of

the minister, as on the lips of an angel of God: Every sentence seems to come from heaven; and even a feeble teacher, with all his infirmities at such a season, seems like a divine messenger, and raises your attention and delight. But the cause is within yourselves, the activity of your devout affections under the influence of divine grace.

Is not benevolence and kindness to our fellow-creatures, liberality to the poor, and especially to our fellow-christians, another part of our religion? *Pure religion and undefiled—is this, to visit the fatherless and the widow in their affliction;* James i. 27. *He that loves God must love his brother also;* 1 John iv. 21. But how can we fulfil the several duties of help and relief, defence and consolation to our brethren, if we do not indulge the warm and tender affections of pity, and sympathy and love? The bounty of the hands, even to the most distressed object, will be but scanty and small, if there be no compassion in the heart: But when we love our brethren for God's sake, and excite in our hearts all the friendly and compassionate affections towards the poor and the miserable, then covetousness and self-love lie down vanquished, and have no power to withhold the hand from a liberal distribution of blessings to those that are in need. Compassion melts the heart, and makes the hands flow with bounty and relief.

I might give other instances also of the same happy effect of holy passions, in the more difficult duties of religion, in mortification of most beloved sins, as well as in denying our most darling interests for the sake of Christ. "How sweet is it," saith St. Austin, "under the power of divine love, how sweet is it to abstain from all the old, sweet, and sinful delights of the flesh?" *Herein is our love to God manifested, that we keep his commandments; and none of his commands are grievous;* 1 John v. 3.

And as the duties of religion are fulfilled with unusual delight, so every sin becomes more painful to the heart, when the passions are divinely tinctured. The very dwelling of sinful principles in the heart, the working of unruly appetites and unholy inclinations, and the first motions of pride, and wantonness, and malice, and envy, and love of the world, are all very grievous to a soul whose affections are renewed and sanctified. Every compliance with temptation breaks in upon the sweet serenity and peace of the spirit, and gives it great disquietude. Read the case of the holy Psalmist and of St. Peter, after their folly. Thus it is in some measure with every sincere and lively christian; nor is the spirit ever at rest after any remarkable sin, till that sin hath been made bitter to the soul, and till the soul has made fresh and warm application to the throne of grace, by humble repentance and faith in the blood of sprinkling.

It is a known doctrine, both in the jewish and christian church, that not only the pleasant, but the painful and uneasy passions of the heart are consecrated to divine purposes. Sorrow for sin, and deep mourning, teach us powerfully that *it is an evil and bitter thing* to forsake the Lord our God; and in this manner *our wickedness* is appointed to *correct us*, and our backslidings to reprove us; *Jer.* ii. 19. By grief of the soul, and *by the sadness of the countenance* arising from it, Solomon tells us, *the heart is made better;* Eccles. vii. 3. When holy David began to be *sorry for his sin*, when he *watered his couch with his tears*, when his *eye was consumed with grief*, and he *roared by reason of the disquietness of his heart*, Psalm vi. 3, 6, 7. he was then under the workings of recovering grace. When St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians *made them sorry* for their connivance at the incestuous iniquity of one of their members, he tells them in his second letter, how necessary this sorrow was, this *godly sorrow, which worketh repentance* unto salvation: What a train of holy passions attended it! *What indignation* against sin, and

the sinner! *What holy fear* of defilement by communion with such a crime, or the indulgence of it! *What vehement desire* after cleansing and forgiving grace! *What revenge* against such foul inquity! *What zeal* to approve themselves clear before God and man! 2 *Cor.* vii. 9, 10, 11.

The blessed God *does not willingly afflict and grieve the children of men;* Lam. iii. 33. and he would not have made the sorrows and the bitter groans of repentance so necessary a part of the christian life, had he not known the painful passions of nature to have so happy an influence in the kingdom of his grace. By this anguish of the conscience, by these afflictions of the spirit, God carries on his own designs of mercy, and makes the soul *partaker of his holiness;* Heb. xii. 10.

V. "To employ the passions for God, is to take a most powerful engine of mischief out of the hand of sin and Satan, and to reduce it to the obedience of Christ." It is the recovery of a considerable part of human nature out of dismal captivity and bondage. The passions are the warmest and strongest powers of the soul: They are the artillery whereby man wages war either for or against heaven. The passions by nature are devoted to the service of sin, and engaged on the devil's side in his wars against the Almighty, and they are charged with the seeds of impious fire and thunder: But when divine grace hath taken hold of them, and employed them on the side of God and religion, it is like seizing the cannon of the enemy from their old batteries, and planting them in new bulwarks, to make war upon the devil and all his army.

Fearful and impious work do the passions make, when they are engaged on the side of the flesh, the world, and the devil. What bold contempt of God, and all that is holy! What unruly violence of love to vanity and sensual pleasure! What mad delight in sin! What impetuous desires of forbidden objects! What malice boils in the heart against our neighbour, upon every supposed injury! What wicked envy frets and rages in the soul at the welfare of others! What wrath, and indignation, and revenge, are continually ready to be in arms! And how do these hellish passions employ the tongue in slander and lies, and sometimes imbrue the hands in mischief and blood! Now what a glorious victory is it to have the vicious affections entirely subdued, and the other powers of nature, which had been usurped by hell, seized and restrained, and consecrated to the God of heaven, and become instruments of holiness and peace! To have these engines of iniquity become happy mediums of adoration and service to God, and of hourly benefits to men! O blessed and divine change! O the sovereign power of converting grace!

VI. "I might add in the next place, that when the passions are sanctified and formed to a divine temper, it gives the gospel of Christ credit and honour in the world, in that it can triumph over the strongest powers of corrupt nature, and subdue them to the service of God and religion." With what wicked violence were the passions of Paul engaged against the cause of christianity, when, to use his own expressions, *he was exceedingly mad against* the saints, *compelled them to blaspheme*, and *persecuted them to strange cities;* Acts xxvi. 11. When he *breathed out threatenings and slaughter* against the disciples of the Lord; *Acts* ix. 1. Now to have this man changed from a lion to a lamb, from a persecutor to a preacher of the gospel; to hear this man propagating that gospel with zeal, which he so lately endeavoured to destroy with fury, what divine honours this event gave to the religion of Christ when it was but young in the world? And as there were multitudes of such instances in those primitive days, so I hope they are not utterly wanting now.

There are, I hope, in our age, in this city, and even in this assembly, some christians

that can bear sacred witness to the divine power of the gospel in this respect. One can say, "how fond was I of vanity and sensual pleasure! Regardless of God, and thoughtless of religion, with an aversion to all that was virtuous and holy. But, through the grace of God, the object of my love is changed: I delight now in the things of God; I love his word, his people, himself, and his Christ, above all things in the world."

Another can say, "I was greedy of money, and ambitious of vain-glory." Another confesses, "I was fretful and quarrelsome; I was malicious and envious; I was wrathful and resenting; and my ungodly passions were ever ready to rise and ferment against my fellow-creatures: But now, through the influence of grace, I find my chief ambition is to be a child of God, and to exceed others in holiness: I covet the riches of grace, and the benefits of the gospel, above all other treasures: Now I am angry at myself because of sin, and angry at sinners when they dishonour God and my Saviour; I love my Lord Jesus, who hath procured forgiveness for me; and I would love all men, and forgive them for Jesus's sake."

It is a public glory brought to the gospel of Christ, when our devout and pious passions surmount all the carnal affections of the heart; when the fear of God rises so high, and grows so strong in the soul, as to subdue and overcome all other fears: And if we fear God sincerely, we need fear nothing else. It is very honourable to Christ and his religion, when the love of God and of Jesus Christ, the Saviour, flames high above all other loves, and makes us forego and forget every thing which might be dear and valuable to us before, if it stands in competition with God, the supreme object of our love. When the christian can rejoice, and say, "I love my father and my mother, my wife and children, with as true and tender an affection as ever I did; but I love God and my Redeemer with a more sublime passion. Neither father nor mother, nor dear young children, nor the wife of the bosom, shall withhold me from my duty to God; and, through the aids of divine grace, I would be ready to offer myself, with all my interest in them, as a sacrifice to the love of Christ.

It is glorious indeed to see the devout passions so much transcend all other passions and appetites, all other fears, loves, and desires, as that they all melt away and vanish before the power of divine fear and divine love. To see all our fondest desires, and our warmest passions for creatures languish and sink, and die under the present influences of devout affection, as the light of a candle vanishes and is lost in the midst of sunbeams, or as the noise of a shaking leaf dies and is unheard in the midst of thunder: O happy souls, who have arrived at this sublime degree of christianity! Thither let our hearts aspire daily, and never cease our holy labours and prayers till we love, till we fear, till we desire God in this glorious and intense degree.

VII. In the last place I add, "the sanctified passions render us so much the more conformable to the blessed Jesus, and fitter for his presence and enjoyment in heaven." As the Son of God put on our flesh and blood, so he assumed the various powers and properties of human nature, the appetites and passions of mankind: He endured hunger and thirst, he had fear and love, hope and joy; nor were the more troublesome affections of anger and sorrow left out of his constitution, but they were all innocent and holy; they were never tainted with sin as ours are; they had no corrupt mixtures to defile his soul. Our passions are like water with mud at the bottom; when they are moved, they too frequently raise the mud, and betray their impurity: But the passions of Christ

were ever pure; like water from the clearest fountain in a glass of crystal, which, though it be never so much agitated, is still unpolluted.

These pathetic powers of his holy soul were ever engaged in the interest of religion, and employed for pious purposes. He loved God his Father with the most perfect and intense affection; and he let the world know, that he loved the Father; *John* xiv. 31. He *rejoiced in spirit,* when he gave thanks to God; *Luke* x. 21. and when God hid his face from him, and forsook him, *his soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death;* Matt. xxvi. 38. He was grieved and angry with the hypocrites and the blasphemers of his day, and *looked round upon them with* wrath and holy *indignation;* Mark iii. 5. How pathetic and vehement was his zeal for his Father's honour, when he scourged out the buyers and sellers from the temple? *The zeal of the house of God consumed* and wasted his spirits, as it is said; *John* ii. 17. He loved his church with most astonishing fervour, for his *love* was *stronger than death;* Eph. v. 25. *And greater love hath no man than this, that one should lay down his life for* another; *John* xv. 13. How passionately did he mourn at his own foresight of the dismal distress of his enemies at Jerusalem! "He looked upon the bloody city with tender compassion, *and wept over it,* with the tears of grief and love;" *Luke* xix. 41. And what divine passions were exercised in his devout retirements, what holy fervours in the wilderness and upon midnight mountains, is only known to God, and to ministering angels.

Thus it appears, that the more our affections are tinctured with piety and goodness, and the warmer is their engagement in the things of God, the more nearly shall we imitate our glorious Redeemer. O divine pattern, beyond all our imitation! But blessed are those who are the nearest copiers of it.

But you will enquire, "How will this exercise of devout passion fit us the more for the heavenly world?" Angels are not clothed with flesh and blood as we are, and the spirits of the departed saints have left this part of their nature behind them in the grave: What efforts of passion, therefore, can there be among the inhabitants of heaven? To this I answer, that though spirits departed, and angels, can have no such ferments of animal nature, as go to make up those principles and powers, which we call the passions in this mortal state, yet there is something akin to them, which may be called affections in the very nature of every intelligent creature: Spirits which have no relation to flesh can fear and hope, can love and desire, can rejoice and grieve, and that in strong and intense degrees; otherwise there would be no hell for the separate souls of the wicked, and for the punishment of devils; nor would there be a heaven for the reward of *the spirits of just men made perfect:* There cannot be a heaven without pleasure, nor a hell without grief and anguish: Since therefore there is, and must be something of pure affection in separate spirits, that bears a correspondence with our passions in this mortal state, we may be well assured, that the more these passions are refined and sanctified, and the more they are engaged about divine objects, in a proper manner, according to the will of God, we shall thereby acquire a greater meetness for the business and blessedness of heaven, and be better prepared for the exercise of those more spiritual affections which belong to the saints departed, and to the happy inhabitants of the intellectual world.

The holy apostle teaches us this doctrine in that sweet period of scripture; 1 *Pet.* i. 3, 6, 8. When we are *begotten again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,* therein *we greatly rejoice;* and the joy surmounts all our present heaviness, and bears us in conquest and triumph through our *manifold temptations:* It gives us a

transporting view of praise, honour, and glory, at the appearance of our Lord Jesus; *whom having not seen we love; in whom though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory;* or as it is in the original, with unspeakable and glorified joy. You see here, that the three blessed affections of hope, love, and joy, bring the soul to the confines of the heavenly world, set him as it were at the gates of paradise, fill the heart with those divine sensations which are near akin to the joys of glorified spirits. Thus, by the exercise of the holy passions in a sublime degree, " we are come *to the spirits of the just made perfect*, and almost admitted into the glorious presence of Jesus, our adored Mediator; *Heb.* xii. 23, 24. Let us awake, let us arise, let us *shake ourselves out of the dust* of this earth, and dress our souls in these *beautiful garments:* Let us long and breathe after these sacred sensations of refined pleasure, to which the church itself is too much a stranger in our degenerate times. These are fair emblems and sweet foretastes of those unknown " pleasures which flow from the right hand of God without ceasing, and run, like rivers, an everlasting course, through all the ages of eternity;" *Psalm* xvi. 13.

Meditation. " How glad am I to find that not only my understanding and my will, but that all my passions may be made serviceable to God and religion, to my noblest designs, and my eternal interest! I am sure some of them have had an unhappy influence to lead me astray from my God, and my duty, and I am greatly pleased to hear that they are capable of being reduced to the service of my Maker, and become instruments of holiness and peace. Descend, O divine Spirit, descend into my heart! Take hold of these active and sprightly powers of my nature, and bind them to thy eternal service. Awaken my fear of the majesty and the justice of God, that I may seek earnestly what I shall do to please him, and how I may obtain his favour: And let my fear be constant and restless till my feet are led into the paths of salvation, and I feel the constraining power of divine love.

" Let my devout passions be ever awake and lively when I hear the things of God spoken, or when I read of the momentous concerns of religion, and a life to come. Then the sacred truths and duties of christianity shall be impressed deep on my memory, and written there as with a pen of diamond, never to be blotted out. O may the warm passions melt my soul to tenderness, and make me susceptive of every holy impression! May this heart of mine, this table of stone, be softened by devout affection, till all the necessary and important parts of religion are written there in lasting characters! May my heart, O Lord, receive the stamp of thy gospel with all its sacred lineaments, till I am become a new creature, transformed into the image of the Son of God!

" How easy will all the duties of holiness become, and all my temptations to sin how weak and ineffectual, if the passionate powers of my nature are warmly engaged for God! How delightful and pleasant shall I then find even the difficult practices of religion! How hateful will every sin be in my eyes, and how painful to my heart, when divine love as a sovereign has taken possession of it, and set all the train of affections at work there in its own service! No more shall I complain of weariness, or be tired of religious worship: I shall say in my heart no more, *when will the sabbath be over?* Nor cut short my prayers and meditations, to gratify the flesh, and obey its corrupt influence. If I am winged with holy passion, I shall climb over mountains of difficulty in my way

to heaven, or remove hills of temptation that obstruct my course: Divine love, as well as faith, can remove mountains.

"O how happy shall I be when all my passions are sanctified! They have been, and I mourn to speak it, they have been wretched engines of mischief in the hand of sin and Satan: They have defiled my soul shamefully; they have broken the law of my God; they have abused his grace and his gospel, dishonoured my Saviour, and grieved his Holy Spirit. When shall these powers of my nature be rescued from their sinful slavery, and be devoted to purposes divine and heavenly? O that my fear and my love, my anger and my desire, my grief and my joy, were all pointed to their proper objects, that they might never more break out in an unruly manner to dishonour God, or to awaken sharp anguish in my own conscience! I would watch, I would pray, I would labour, and wrestle day and night against the body of sin that dwells in me. O for the sovereign influence of almighty grace, to correct all the disorders of my soul, and to turn every passion of my nature into a principle of holiness! Let the blessed gospel of Christ obtain this triumph over me: Let the gospel subdue these rebellious powers to the obedience of my Lord and Saviour: May the gospel have the glory of so divine a change!

"Come, blessed Saviour, set thy holy example before me, in a more illustrious and transforming light: Let all the devout passions of zeal and love, which reigned in thy heart, reign also in mine: O that I might copy out the wonders of thy zeal for the honour of God, and thy love to the race of man! With what a divine vehemence were thy holy affections engaged in worship! But alas, how cold are all my attempts of devotion! Kindle, O Jesus, the sacred fire within me: Let it melt down my heart, and mould me into thy likeness. Let my soul be made up of divine love, as a happy preparative for the joys of heaven, and the everlasting presence of God, and my Saviour." *Amen.*

DISCOURSE IV.

INFERENCES FROM THE USEFULNESS OF THE PASSIONS.

THE last discourse has informed us, that the Passions are not useless things, even in the important affairs of religion and godliness. We have seen how many and glorious are the advantages that we may derive from the right use of the affections in the christian life. Let us not suffer so momentous a theme to pass away, without drawing some inferences or remarks from it.

Remark I. May the passions of our nature be made so serviceable to the interests of our religion, then " surely the doctrine of the stoics is a very unreasonable opinion, for it teaches us to suppress all our passions entirely, and, if possible, to root them out of our natures." It is evident from what we have heard, that our pursuit of the important things of religion, in this present state, would be very faint and cold, and feeble, if it were not animated by some of these vigorous principles, these affectionate powers and sensations: And shall we abandon and destroy all these assistants to piety and goodness, which are wrought into the very frame of our beings?

It is granted, that our passions in this fallen state have their unhappy share of the general corruption of our nature: It is granted they are sometimes made the mischievous incentives to vice, and lead us astray from the path of holiness; and if they could never be reformed, they ought to be rooted out. But when they are once sanctified by a touch of the finger of God, and tinctured with a savour of piety, they become very pleasant and powerful springs of duty, both to God and man.

A holy fear of the great God our Creator, and a solicitous concern what shall become of us when we die, is the first and most general spring of religion: This wakens us to enquire " what we must do to please the God that made us." When we arrive at some comfortable hope of our acceptance with God, then divine love promotes our piety and virtue: Then religion works within us by nobler principles, and it is advanced to higher degrees, than a mere principle of fear could raise it: All the passions of the man are subject to the government of holy love, and are employed by it for heavenly purposes. When we love God supremely, we shall love men also, who are *made after the image of God:* From a due benevolence to men spring a thousand words and deeds of charity and pity, and godlike goodness. When our refined affections work in this manner toward God and men, we come by degrees to delight in all that is holy; we arrive at the true taste of religious pleasures, and make near approaches to the joys of the upper world, where holiness and pleasure are perfect and everlasting.

Thus it may be said, that after some general foundations laid in the knowledge of God and ourselves, " Religion begins in fear, it is carried on by love, and it ends in joy." Erroneous and unhappy is that philosophy that would banish these affections from human nature, which have so powerful an influence on the religious life, and assist our preparation for death and heaven.

II. "How happily has the blessed God suited his various revelations in scripture to the powers of our nature?" How well are they fitted to work upon our affections, and to engage those active powers of the soul in the interests of religion and godliness! God himself, by his own methods of address to men, from one end of scripture to the other, proves the truth of this discourse, and the advantage of the passions in things of religion. If God speaks of himself, how bright are the displays of his majesty and grandeur, to awaken our reverence and religious fear? He is *the Holy One that inhabits eternity*, who created all things by his word, *the Lord of Lords, and the King of Kings:* He speaks and the earth trembles, and *the pillars of heaven are astonished at his reproof;* Job ix. 6. xxvi. 11. He is a God *fearful*, or tremendous even *in* his *praises;* Exod xv. 11. How surprising are the discoveries of his power and knowledge, to raise our wonder! He ranks the stars in their order, and *calls them all by their names, and not one fails* to appear at his call; *Psalm* cxlvii. 4. His eye surveys all the creation, and *knows* the *thoughts* of the heart *afar off;* Psalm cxxxix. 2. *He takes up the isles as a little thing;* Isaiah xl. 15. *He touches the mountains, and they smoke;* Psalm civ. 32. *Who can stand before him*, or lift up the hand against him and prosper?

If he manifest the riches of his mercy and goodness, how is the divine language suited to strike upon all the springs of our hope and love, and to allure our hearts to him? *How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God?* Psalm xxxvi. 7. In his *favour is life*, and his love is *better than life;* Psalm lxiii. 3. He has magnified his love towards us, and the exceeding riches of his grace, that *while we were enemies* and rebels, he sent his Son to die, in order to redeem us from death.

If he reveal to us Christ Jesus, his beloved Son, in what a glorious light does he place him before our eyes, to command our veneration and honour, our faith and our fervent affection? *He is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person;* Heb. i. 3. *He was with God* before the foundation of the world, for by him the worlds were created; *John* i. 3. He is the man in whom *dwells all the fulness of the godhead bodily;* Col. ii. 9. He is *God manifest in the flesh;* 1 Tim. iii. 16. He came down from the Father's bosom, *not to condemn the world*, but to expose his own life and blood for our sakes, to *make his soul an offering for our sins*, and to sustain unknown anguish and sorrows, in the room and stead of such rebels as we are.

If he opens heaven in the gospel, and brings *life and immortality to light*, what *thrones of glory*, what *crowns of righteousness* does he set before us? What mansions of paradise, *what rivers of pleasure* flowing from the throne of God, what rich fruits of the tree of life, what blissful visions in the presence of God and Christ, what blessed society of angels and holy souls are described, as the enjoyments of this heaven, on purpose to draw out our strongest desires towards it, and raise our joyful hope and our warmest zeal in the pursuit of it!

When he gives us a view of hell, how dreadfully are the executions of divine wrath described there? What a gnawing *worm* in the conscience *that never dies*, what a *fire* that is *never quenched?* What burning *lakes of fire and brimstone*, kindled by the breath of an angry God? What troops of devils and damned spirits must be our companions there, and *the smoke of their torment ascending for ever and ever?* Rev. xiv. 11. How happily are these divine descriptions suited to awaken us out of security, and to excite us to passion of fear in the highest degree, that *knowing the terrors of the Lord*, we may stir up all our

powers to *flee from the wrath to come*, and seek reconciliation to God by the blood of Christ.

If sin be mentioned in scripture, in what odious colours is it set before us! It was sin that ruined our first parents, and drove them out of paradise, and spread death and misery through all this lower world: It is the *unrighteousness of men* that has awakened and *revealed the wrath of God*, in all the terrible instances of it, from the ancient apostasy and fall of angels in heaven, to the final destruction of this world by fire, and the punishment of men and devils in hell for ever: And all this that sin might appear exceeding sinful, and raise in us the highest hatred and utmost aversion.

The great and blessed God, who formed us at first, perfectly knows our frame; he is well acquainted with all the powers and passions of human nature, and the design and use of them all: And therefore when he wrote these holy messages to us by his apostles and his prophets, he does not only reveal things to our understandings, which reason could not find out, and then leaves us to make the best of them; but he warmly and powerfully addresses himself to the affectionate principles within us, in order to make the discoveries of his grace pierce deeper into our souls, that he might recover us from our guilt and misery, and persuade us to partake of his salvation.

III. We may learn from this discourse, "how much it is the business of a minister of the gospel to engage the affections of his hearers, and to bring them over to the service of God and religion." It is granted that the first work is to inform the understanding, to teach mankind what they are to believe concerning the great God, and what duties they owe to him. To this end the preacher must not only draw his doctrines from the light of nature, but from the word of God, and bring them down to the capacities of his hearers. It is his constant business to explain the word of God to men, to propose the naked truth with the strongest reasons to support it: He must endeavour to strike light into the mind, and convince the reason and judgment of men; he must make it appear that they are guilty before God, and that there is no way of relief or hope but in and by Jesus, the great Mediator, and thus lead sinful and perishing men into the knowledge and faith of Christ, as an all-sufficient Saviour: All this is a necessary and indispensable part of his work, but it is not the whole of it. When the understanding is enlightened, the passions must also be addressed; for God has wrought these powers into human nature, that they might be the vital and vigorous springs of actions and duties.

If the judgment be never so much convinced, yet while the affections remain unmoved, the work of religion will be begun with difficulty, and will drive on but very heavily. This the prophets and the apostles well knew; and the great God, who employed them, knew it too; and therefore he sent them armed with the powers of natural and divine oratory, to reach the inmost affections, to penetrate the heart, and to raise holy commotions in the very centre of the soul. What mean all the promises of the gospel, but to work upon our hope, and to raise our highest expectations? What means the dreadful language of so many severe threatenings, but to shake us out of our security, and to rouse our fears? If there had been no such principles as hope and fear in man, I am persuaded there would scarce have been any such things as promises and threatenings in the book of God. The word of the Lord is compared to a fire and a hammer, Jer. xxiii. 29. *Is not my word like as a fire, saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?* And it ought to be delivered and pronounced by the preachers of it in such a manner as

may break the rocky hearts of stubborn sinners, as may fright them from their beloved iniquities, by the terror of everlasting burnings.

The holy scripture is a cabinet of divine curiosities, full of admirable allurements to invite and entertain awakened minds: It should be so happily unfolded and displayed by the preachers of it, as to represent in a noble manner the amazing grace and love of God, and the blessings of the gospel; and that with such a holy fervour, as to light up a divine flame of desire, hope and love, in the souls of all that hear it. To what purpose were the fancies of the holy writers enriched from heaven, with so bright and various a treasure of sacred images, but to raise the devout passions of their readers, by flashing upon their imagination with divine light? Their words are sunbeams, that not only diffuse a sacred illumination around the eye of the soul, but kindle the heart into life and zeal. To what end doth all the pomp of oratory display itself in their writings? To what end do they use all the arts of trope and figure, all the beauteous, the alluring, and the terrible colours that nature can afford, and that metaphor can borrow? Is it not all with a design to strike the soul of man in its most passionate powers, and spread vital religion through the inmost recesses of the heart?

Let the ministers of the word, who are zealous for the honour of God, for the glory of Christ, and for the success of their labours; read the writings of the holy prophets night and day, and make them their pattern, transferring the beauties of the law to the ministry of the gospel. The prophets do not merely tell us in a dry and cold manner, that sin is an evil thing, but they terribly denounce the thunder of the wrath of God against it, and pour down his vengeance on the heads of guilty rebels, to work upon our fear, to affright us from sin, and hasten us to fly to the arms of divine mercy. Nor do they merely say to us, that God is merciful; but in a most delightful and inviting manner, they display the boundless mercies of God, and the workings of his bowels of compassion, in all the pathetic language of tenderness, as though he were made of flesh and blood as we are.

When our blessed Lord himself came down on earth, to become a preacher of his Father's wrath and mercy, what eternal woes does he denounce against hypocrites and impenitent wretches? How gently does he invite the *weary and heavy-laden* sinners *to come to him, that they may find rest?* Matt. xi. 28. How widely does he unfold the gates of his Father's mercy, and that even to murderers and adulterers, and thieves and blasphemers, that sinners of the largest size may enter in and be partakers of divine salvation. How happily does St. Paul imitate his blessed Master! *Knowing the terrors of the Lord, he persuaded men,* and he beseeches them, in the most endearing language, *in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God;* 2 Cor. v. 11, 18—20. In what pathetic language doth he set before us the glorious love of God, in contriving the recovery of fallen men, and providing grace for them in Christ Jesus, before the world began; and in saving them by such a surprising method of mingled severity and mercy, as the death and agonies of his most beloved Son! And all this on purpose to melt or soften our affections into repentance, love and gratitude! How wonderfully do the sacred writers attack the passions on all sides, *if by any means they may save* a soul from hell? Happy preachers, who approach this divine pattern!

Can any of us now content ourselves to bring cold and languid discourses into the pulpit, with this Bible under our hands? Will not all the sacred fervours of these inspired preachers reproach us to our faces, while we read and explain their sermons? Shall we go on to affect a calm and stupid politeness of phrase, in the very face of these warm and

heavenly orators? Can we be content any longer to be the cold and lifeless rehearsers of the great and glorious things of our religion? Can we go on to speak to perishing sinners, who lie drowsy and slumbering on the brink of hell, in so soft, so calm, and gentle a manner, as though we were afraid to awaken them? What shall we say to these things? Does divine love send dreaming preachers to call dead sinners to life? Preachers that are content to leave their hearers asleep on the precipice of eternal destruction? Have they no such thing as passion belongs to them? Have they no pity? Have they no fear? Have they no sense of the worth of souls? Have they no springs of affection within them? Or do they think their hearers have none? Or is passion so vile a power, that it must be all devoted to things of flesh and sense, and must never be applied to objects divine and heavenly? Who taught any of us this lazy and drowsy practice? Did God or his prophets, did Christ or his apostles, instruct us in this modish art of still life, this lethargy of preaching, as it has been called by a late writer? Did the great God ever appoint statues for his ambassadors, to invite sinners to his mercy? Words of grace, written upon brass or marble, would do the work almost as well. Where the preachers become stone, no wonder if the hearers are moveless: But let the ministers of the living word, who address men upon matters of infinite concernment, shew, if possible, that they are infinitely concerned about them. This leads my thoughts to the next remark.

IV. "How kindly has the grace and wisdom of God dealt with us, in appointing men of like passions with ourselves to become his ministers and our teachers in the things of religion!" Men, who have the same natural affections, who can feel within themselves all the train of devout passions, and express it in their holy ministrations! Men, who are subject to the same sins and follies, and are capable of the same religious fear and penitent sorrow! Men, who stand in need of the same salvation, and must be trained up to heaven by the exercise of the same faith, and love, and hope.

If angels had been made the only messengers of the gospel, angels, who have no flesh and blood, no communion in the same animal nature, no share of our fears and sorrows, no interest in the same redeeming mercy and pardon, they could not have expressed all the same passions, nor given us such an example of them in themselves. But a minister of the word, taken from among men, has been in a sinful state, and is now become a sincere christian, or he should be so. He is supposed to have his own soul filled with love to God; he has felt his own fears awakened by the terrors of the Lord, and the threatenings of eternal misery; he has found his trembling soul encouraged to hope by the rich promises of grace; he has felt his own hatred rising against sin, his delight raised by the views and expectations of the favour of God, and eternal happiness in his presence. How well is such a teacher suited to set the terrors of hell, the evil of sin, and the riches of divine grace, in Christ Jesus, before the eyes of sinful men, who have the same natural passions with himself; and to turn these affectionate powers of his hearers into a religious channel, by representing these awful objects in a pathetic manner?

The preacher should be an example to the hearers, and then he preaches with most power and success. It is a well-known saying, "If you would draw out my tears, you must first weep yourself." How cold and dull, and unaffected with divine things, is mankind by nature! How careless and indolent is a whole assembly, when the preacher appears like a lifeless engine, pronouncing words of law or grace! When he speaks of

divine things in such a dry, in such a cold and formal manner, as though they had no influence on his own heart! When the words freeze upon his lips, the hearts of hearers are freezing also: But where we find devout affection mingled with solid argument in the discourse, there the lips of the preacher seem to speak light and life at once, and he helps to communicate the holy passion all around him, by feeling it first himself.

And here I am sure, we, who are honoured with this sacred employment, have reason to examine our hearts, to reflect on our indolence, our lifeless conduct, and our cold labours in the pulpit; and mourn to think how imperfectly and how ineffectually we perform the awful work of the ministry. And shall our own affections still be so unraised and unmoved, while we speak of the great and momentous things of God, and Christ and religion, of death and judgment, of heaven and hell? Shall we always preach with such a deadness of spirit, such a shameful absence of divine fervour? May the blessed God forgive your preacher, and may you forgive him; and may sovereign grace raise a warm flame of vital religion in his heart, and communicate it to all your souls!

V. If the passions are so useful in the solemn affairs of religion, "there is yet farther occasion to admire the wisdom and grace of God, that he has appointed several such institutions or parts of worship to belong to our holy religion, as are suited to work upon our senses, and thereby to awaken pious passions within us?"

Besides the voice of public prayer, and the affectionate speech and language of preaching the gospel, we are also taught and exhorted to sing the praises of God with holy melody. What a multitude of exhortations are found in the book of Psalms, *to make a joyful noise unto the Lord*, and to sing new songs before him in the kingdom of the Messiah. The advice of St. Paul in the New Testament echoes to the harp of David, and calls upon us to *speak* to one another, as well as to ourselves, *in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs*, and to sing and make *melody with* grace *in our hearts to the Lord;* Eph. v. 19. and Col. iii. 16. St. James gives the same encouragement: *If any be merry* or cheerful, let this passion of joy express itself in a devout manner, by singing psalms; *James* v. 13. How happily suited is this ordinance to give a loose to the devout soul in its pious and cheerful affections? What a variety of sanctified desires, and hopes and joys, may exert themselves in this religious practice, may kindle the souls of christians into holy fervour, may raise them near to the gates of heaven, and the harmony of the blessed inhabitants there? Nor are pious sorrows utterly excluded from this ordinance: There are tunes and songs of mournful melody to solace the humble penitent, and to give a sweetness to his tears.

And besides all this, there are the two glorious and sacred ordinances of baptism and the Lord's-supper, wherein divine things are exhibited to us in a sensible manner by figures and emblems which are designed to impress animal nature, and by the eyes to awaken the passions of the heart. How proper an emblem is *baptism* to represent our being washed in the blood of Christ? And the pouring out of water on the face or head, how well is it suited to represent the pouring out of the Spirit of God on men, and by this means to awaken the holy affections of hope and joy? How happily is the *Lord's-supper* contrived by divine wisdom to represent the death and love of our blessed Saviour, and the benefits that we derive from his sufferings? Jesus Christ crucified is *evidently set forth before our eyes;* Gal. iii. 1. He is represented even in his bleeding and dying love, while the bread is broken, and the wine poured out before us. O how should we loose the springs of pious passion at such a season! How should our love to our Redeemer kindle

and rise high at the sight of the sufferings of the Son of God, who took our flesh and blood, that he might be capable of dying; that his flesh might be torn, and cut and bruised, that his blood might be spilled for our sakes, that he might bear such agonies as belonged to sinful creatures, with a gracious design to deliver us from misery and everlasting death. For ever blessed be the name of Jesus, who has suffered such pangs and sorrows in our stead; and blessed be his wisdom and grace who has appointed the continual repetition of such an ordinance, such a lively memorial of his dying love, to touch all the springs of religious affection within us.

VI. Since the passions of human nature have so considerable an influence in matters of religion, then we justly infer, that youth is the proper time to set about the important work of religion, when the passions are warm and lively, and active. After we have been well instructed in the principles of christianity, if we can but engage these sprightly powers of our natures betimes, on the side of God and godliness, we lay a happy foundation for the practice of piety all our lives. It is of admirable and unknown advantage, to have all the passions of the heart tinctured deep with heaven and religion in our early days. By this means virtue and piety will be fixed and rooted in the soul; it will stand the blasts of violent temptation, and bring forth the divine fruits of holiness through the following years. We shall be better prepared to combat every opposition; we shall be better secured against the snares that beset our youth; we shall resist the gay allurements of the world, and the flattering vanities that attack our senses and our souls in this dangerous season of life. It is the great cunning and the design of the devil and the world to work upon the warm passions of youth, to engage them in the service of sin and folly: Happy are those who are possessed of a divine antidote against this poison! who have their passions all watchful and armed, ready to resist the assaults of hell, and to disappoint every attack that is made on virtue and religion!

VII. Is there so much advantage to be expected from the passions in the practice of religion? Then "how much do we lose both of the profit and the pleasure of religion, for want of the engagement of our passions therein!" Therefore it is that virtue and godliness seem to carry with them so dull and heavy an aspect in the world; therefore they appear so little inviting, because there are so few christians, in this degenerate age, that have these affectionate powers of the soul deeply tinctured with the things of God. We live at a poor, low, cold rate, when we only talk of christianity as a matter of dispute, and practise the outward devoirs and ceremonies of it as a matter of custom and form, while the heart and the passions of it have little share in our christianity. If our love and desire, our hope and our joy, are all laid out on the things of sense and time, and we leave only a few cold reasonings to be employed in the most awful and sublime things of God, and heaven and eternity, it is no wonder we find so little of the pleasure of godliness, and that religion gains so little reputation, and so few followers. Oh! what blessed lives did the primitive disciples of Christ enjoy! What divine satisfaction, what heavenly glory, what convincing power attended their practice, when their whole souls, with all their affections, were devoted to God and Christ, and engaged in the affairs of the upper world! They lived on earth like the children of heaven, and brought a foretaste of the pleasures of the upper world into these lower regions. Oh! when shall these holy seasons return again? When shall the noble principles of the christian faith animate all the powers of nature, and make us live as becomes the followers and the worshippers of the holy Jesus.

Meditation. "Many and useful are the lessons which I have now learned from the happy influence of the passions, in the important affairs of my salvation. Blessed be God that I was not born in heathenism, and left merely to the teachings of the philosophers. Even the stoics, who were some of the best of them, deprive us of all the advantage of pious affections, and all the pleasurable sensations that may be derived from religion; while they teach us to root the passions, if possible, out of our natures. My soul shall mourn in secret for my sins, and be ashamed of my follies: My heart shall fear and love the Lord my God, and rejoice and hope in Jesus my Saviour: My spirit with all its warmest affections are thine, O my God, for ever and ever!

"Let all the sects of philosophy hide their heads, and lie silent; give me the Bible, where God himself speaks to me by his prophets and apostles: How divinely excellent are their writings! With what sovereign influence do they address my fear and my hope, by the discoveries of a hell and a heaven! How powerfully do they awaken my repentance for past sins, and melt my soul into holy sorrow! In what an illustrious light do they set the majesty of the blessed God, and command my humble adoration! How do they display the wonders of his wisdom, and the riches of his grace in Christ Jesus, to attract all my powers of desire and love! What a blessed foundation have the scriptures laid for an infinite variety of devout inferences and pathetic meditations, suited to my own case? There I find the divine truths that can relieve my soul under every distress; and there I learn the affectionate and devout method of applying them. In every needful hour I will go to the Book of God: God and his holy Book are my life, and my exceeding joy: Let my soul abide and live upon the divine variety of awful and transporting objects, which are set before me in those sacred pages. Let me be taught with sacred skill to spread abroad my thoughts on the right hand and on the left, and to expatiate on these holy and heavenly themes: They are fountains of life, and every stream flows with holiness and consolation. Oh! may all my affections be under the command and influence of these sacred writings; and while they give me intense delight, let them animate me to uncommon zeal in the practice of every duty!

"And why should not our ministers, in all their labours of the sanctuary, imitate their inspired predecessors, the apostles and the prophets, in raising the pious passions of all that hear them? Why should they not talk to men in such warm and pathetic language as God himself uses? Doth not the great God, the Author of our nature, know what methods are most effectual to fill our hearts with divine sentiments, to draw us near to himself, and prepare us for heaven? Has he condescended to give us so many glorious patterns of preaching in his word, and shall not all that are employed in the divine work copy out the spirit and fervour, the life and power of these inspired examples! O may this dull and heavy heart of mine ever enjoy the happiness of a fervent and lively ministry, that may not only enlighten my understanding, but warm my heart!

"And since God has ordained that I should be instructed in divine things by men of like passions with myself, may those whom Providence has appointed to instruct me be also examples of pious affection; that while I see their hearts filled with religious fear and holy love, and joy in the Lord, I may also be smitten with the same religious passions, may catch the holy fire, and find all the train of sprightly and devout sensations conveyed to the very centre of my soul!

"Blessed be the wisdom and grace of my God, that has added sensible signs and emblems to the articles of the christian faith. Let me remember, that I was washed with

water in the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit; and let me be ever jealous, lest I defile myself again: And when I attend the sacred institution of the Supper, let all the springs of pious passion be let loose, while I view the Son of God suffering for my sins: Let me feel the meltings of holy sorrow, and the highest and strongest efforts of gratitude and love to that glorious and divine Person who gave himself to death for me.

"Have I heard that youth is a proper season for lively religion, because the passions of nature are then vigorous; Lord, seize all my affectionate powers in this season of youth, and sanctify them to thyself. Prevent the influence of the wicked world by the early impressions of thy grace, that I may resist the vain allurements of flesh and sense, by having those sprightly powers of nature engaged first on the side of religion. Or if my years of youth have enjoyed this rich and divine favour, I would remember the early loving-kindness of my God, and praise his name in my advanced years with joy and thankfulness.

"Grant, O Lord, that I may never lose the pleasure of religion, by suffering my affections to grow cold and languid. Quicken this lifeless spirit of mine by daily influences from above: Shine upon my soul, O Sun of Righteousness; awaken my drowsy powers to active piety and zeal, and let all my passions conspire with my reasoning faculties to promote the interests of religion in my own heart and life, and to diffuse the savour of godliness all around me." *Amen*

DISCOURSE V.

THE ABUSE OF THE PASSIONS IN RELIGION.

IN the two last discourses we learned the use of the passions in matters of religion, and what advantages may be expected from them in the christian life: We proceed now to the fourth general; and that is, to enquire into the abuse of the passions in religious concerns, or when the exercise of our affections, in the things of God, may be pronounced irregular, and in what manner they should be limited and restrained, and put under better conduct.

Abuse I. Then are the passions irregularly exercised, "when we suffer them to influence our opinions in religion, and to determine our judgment in any points of faith or practice." The passions were made to be servants to reason, to be governed by the judgment, and to be influenced by truth; but they were never given us to decide controversies, and to determine what is truth, and what is error. Even the best affections, and those that seem to have a strong tendency toward piety, are not always safe guides in this respect; yet they are too often indulged to sway the mind in its search after truth or duty, as I shall make it appear in several instances:

1. Suppose a person should be exceedingly affected with the unlimited goodness and abounding grace of God; if, by this pious affection towards God and his goodness, he is persuaded to think that God has no such severe vengeance for sinful and rebel creatures, and that he will not destroy such multitudes of mankind in hell as the scripture asserts, or that their punishment shall not be so long and so terrible as God has expressly declared; here the passion of love and esteem for the divine goodness acts in an irregular manner, for it takes off the eyes of the soul from his awful holiness and his strict justice, and the unknown evil that is in sin. It prevents the mind from giving due attention to God's express word, and to those perfections of the divine nature, and his wise and righteous government, which may demand such dreadful and eternal punishment, for the rebellion of a creature against the infinite dignity of its Creator and Governor.

2. Suppose a christian has most powerful impressions made on the passion of fear, by the tremendous ideas of God's majesty, and his punishing justice, and thence he concludes that the great God will pardon no wilful sins, that he will forgive no repeated iniquities, no sins after baptism and the Lord's-supper, or after vows or solemn engagements, that he will have no mercy upon apostates, even though they turn to him by repentance; this is yielding up truth to the passion of fear, and an abuse of our religious dread of the majesty of God; for such an opinion runs counter to the great design of the gospel, which assures us that *Christ came to save the chief of sinners;* 1 Tim. i. 15. to remove the guilt of wilful and repeated sins, and to provide forgiveness for some of the most profligate rebels, even for all that renounce their rebellion.

3. Some pious persons have had such an affectionate zeal to honour God, that they have been led by this passion to contrive various forms of service and ceremony, gay and

costly rites, with long and painful exercises of devotion, which God never appointed, and have introduced a number of them into his worship. A childish fondness to please the great God with bodily services, has tempted them to forget his own divine prerogative, to prescribe how men should worship him. They have been blinded with this sort of fondness for ceremony, in such a degree, as to lead them far astray from the divine simplicity of worship, which the New Testament has appointed.

4. Some persons, out of a passionate desire to honour Christ, and ascribe the whole train of their blessings and salvation to him, have been tempted to think that they are to do nothing toward their own salvation, but to lie still and be saved without any labour or care of their own; so that they have sought no more after sanctification and holiness in themselves, than they have sought to make atonement for their own sins. But this zeal has much darkness in it, and betrays them into a gross mistake, as though they could not ascribe their salvation sufficiently to Christ, unless they fancied that he came to save them in their sins, rather than *to save* them *from sin.*

5. It is possible that a person may have so high an esteem and so excessive a love for some near relation, some christian friend, some wise and pious minister of the gospel, that he sees no fault in them: He imitates all their practice, as though they were perfect patterns; he receives all their opinions for certain and divine truths, and believes every thing which they teach, as though they were infallible, without comparing it with the Bible, which is the only test of truth in matters of revealed religion. This affection of love to ministers or christians is certainly irregular, when it tempts us to set up their judgments, their practices, and their dictates, in the room of the word of God.

6. Again, it is the same culpable indulgence of our passions to sway our judgment, and bias our understanding, when our souls are warmed with the holy fire of love and devotion under a particular sermon, and we cry out, "This is the best sermon that ever was preached, or the finest that ever was composed." Or, perhaps, your devout affections flag and languish under a sermon; you sit indolent and unmoved, and then the sermon goes for a poor dry discourse, and the man that delivered it for a dull and heavy preacher. Each of these hasty and irregular judgments, built on the passions, is very common to christians, and ought to be corrected.

7. I might add another instance akin to the last; and that is, when our devout affections of fear and hope, of holy love and heavenly delight, are raised in a place of public worship, whether at the established church, or among the several denominations of the protestant dissenters, and immediately we conclude, "This is the right mode of worship, this is most agreeable to the gospel, and these people are the only true church of Christ." How weak is this reasoning! And yet how many are there, who have been determined both in their opinion and practice, for or against such a particular community of christians, or mode of worship; and that for their whole lifetime, merely by the effects that one or two attendances at such a particular place of worship have had on their affections.

These arguments, drawn from the passions, have been often employed to support idolatry and transubstantiation, and all the wild inventions of men in the worship of God. What sighs and tears, what warm affections of sorrow and joy, have been sometimes produced by some ingenious orators in the Roman church, in their sermons at Lent, when they have held up a crucifix before the face of the people in the midst of their discourse. While they set forth the sufferings of our Saviour in most pathetic language,

the preachers have fallen down on their knees, and embraced and adored the wooden image: The natural affections of the hearers have been awakened in a very sensible manner, and being mingled with some thoughts of Christ and religion, they have fallen down and worshipped the idol, and have imagined all this to be pure devotion and piety towards God, and his Son Jesus; and after all, they have made their lively passions a sufficient argument that God approved all their fooleries, though, in his own word, he hath expressly forbidden the worship of images.

I have read of another instance, when a poor devout creature hath come to the sacrament of the mass of the Romish church, and her passions being raised to a rapturous degree, as she thought, by the presence of Christ there, under the form of the consecrated wafer, she hath boldly declared, "should all the men on earth, and all the angels in heaven, join together to assure me, that God himself was not there, I would not believe them, for I have seen him, and felt his divine presence." What a wretched and mischievous abuse of passion is this, when persons shall suffer it to lead them to such unwarranted and sinful modes of worship, and persuade them to believe such strange doctrines, as are not only contrary to the express word of God, but a perfect contradiction to nature, sense, and reason! Instances of this kind might be still multiplied. I have mentioned these few only, to make it appear how unreasonable a thing it is to form our opinions in religion by the influence of the passions.

II. Then must the affections in matters of religion be pronounced irregular, "when they run before the understanding, or when they rise higher toward any particular object than the judgment directs." As in the foregoing particular, I told you that the passions were not designed to be directing powers of the soul, in the search of truth or duty; so neither are they made to rule all within us; but they are to be governed by reason and understanding: And in whatsoever instances they assume a superiority over the understanding, or run before it, they are excessive and irregular. Let us enter into a few particulars:

1. Some persons, as soon as they begin to find further light dawning upon their minds, and are let into the knowledge of some doctrine or sentiment which they knew not before, immediately set their zeal to work: Their zeal is all on a flame to propagate and promote this new lesson of truth, before their own hearts are well established in it, upon solid reasonings, and before they have considered whether it be a doctrine of great importance, and whether it merit such a degree of zeal. How common a case is it among christians, and too often found among ministers of the gospel, to give a loose to their affections at the first glimpse of some pleasing opinion, or some fresh discovery of what they call truth. They help out the weakness of the proof by the strength of their passions, and by the pleasure they take in the opinion they have embraced. This confirms their assent too soon, and they grow deaf to the arguments that are brought to oppose it. They construe every text in the scripture to support this doctrine, they bring in the prophets and apostles to maintain it. They fancy they see it in a thousand verses of their Bibles, and they pronounce all men heretics that dare maintain the contrary opinions. Their conduct in this matter is so vehement, as though every gleam of light were sufficient to determine their faith, because it happens to fire their affections; they grow so warm about it, as though every opinion in religion were fundamental; and so fiery is their zeal, as though every mistake deserved the severest censures.

Nor is this the case of the christians only, with relation to the new opinions they

receive: There are too many who take up most of their articles of faith at first without due examination, and without sufficient argument: Their veneration for great names, or their affection to a particular party, has determined their opinions long ago: Their passions and other prejudices have formed their schemes of doctrines, with the neglect or abuse of their understandings, and yet they pronounce as positively upon truth and error, as though they were infallible. Happy are those whose faith is built on better foundations!

2. Again, there are some persons, when they begin to be convinced that such a particular practice is culpable or unlawful, their indignation is too soon awakened, and rises too high; immediately they condemn it, as inconsistent with salvation: Their hatred of it grows as violent, as if it were blasphemy or idolatry: They are ready to break out into hard speeches and railing accusations against all that practise it, and pronounce them apostates and sinners of the first rank. The sudden rise and warmth of their passions does not suffer them to consider, that there are some faults and follies that a good christian may be guilty of through ignorance or inadvertence; there are some sins that do not carry in them such malignity and poison as to destroy all our christianity.

3. There have been some weak christians, when they have heard a sermon, or read a discourse full of sublime language and mysterious darkness, and especially, if the style and manner has been very pathetic, that have been raptured and transported, as though it contained the deepest sense, the noblest truths of religion, and the highest discoveries of grace and the gospel: Whereas, perhaps, there may be scarce any thing in it which has a just agreement with reason or scripture; but when well examined, it proves to be a mere jargon of words, a mixture of unintelligible and unmeaning sounds, with some affectionate airs among them, whereby their passions were fired, and that without knowledge, and beyond all reason: And it is well, if after these flashes of affection and violent transports, they are not deluded into shameful iniquities. This has been the case of some high pretenders in elder and later days. They have *spoken great swelling words of vanity*, they *are murmurers* and *complainers* against the common rank of christians, but they *walk after their own ungodly lusts;* they turn *the grace of God into lasciviousness*, and *they allure* others into lusts of the flesh, *through much wantonness*, and *while they promise liberty, they are the servants of corruption;* 2 Peter ii. 18, 19. and Jude, verses 4, 16, 18.

4. This irregular exercise of the affections running before reason, is eminently exemplified also in another weak sort of people, who are very sincere in the main, but if they read an awful and terrible threatening, or if they hear it pronounced in the pulpit with a just degree of authority and proper accent, their fears are raised in an excessive manner, and their soul is filled with long sorrows and doubtings: Or, if they happen to read or hear a sentence of comfort, they are transported with sudden joy, and rise almost to assurance of the love of God: They give themselves up to the sudden efforts of passion before they suffer themselves to enquire according to scriptural grounds, whether this text of threatenings, or whether the other sentence of comfort, do really belong to them or no.

There are many other cases, wherein it is evident, that the affections in the things of religion get the start of the understanding, and run far before it. But I proceed,

III. It is a very gross abuse of the affections, "when we encourage them to rise

high, and grow very warm about the lesser things of religion, and yet are content to be cold and indifferent in matters of the highest importance." There are too many christians whose warmest zeal is employed about the *mint, the anise, and the cummin* of christianity; *Matt.* xxiii. 23. and have few passions awakened or engaged in the weighty things of the law, or the gospel. They are furiously intent upon speculative notions, and some peculiar opinions, that distinguish the little parties of christendom, and crumble the church to pieces: Their fears, their hopes, their wishes, their desires, their grief and joy, are all employed in party quarrels and in a strife of words: But they are thoughtless and indolent about the momentous duties of love to God, and Christ, of justice to men, of charity to fellow-creatures and fellow-christians. So a sickly fancy is fond of trifles, and careless of solid treasures: So children have their little souls wrapped up in painted toys, while the matters of manly life and necessary business awaken no desire, no delight in them.

Suppose a man mourns to see the church of England lose ground in the nation, or to see the assemblies of protestant dissenters grow thin and decrease, and yet he finds not his soul grieved, and his heart mourning over the atheism and profaneness of the land, the drunkenness and lewdness, the growing heathenism and infidelity of the age: Or suppose a christian triumphs to see the controversy about baptism well managed, and his joys arise, according as his own opinion is bravely supported, while at the same time he takes little pleasure to hear of the conversion of a sinner, or that a wicked family is grown religious. What shall we think of such a person? Is not his religion in a childish and sickly state? Are not his passions, even about religious objects, managed in a very irregular manner, and worthy of just and severe reproof?

IV. There is also another evil conduct of the affections in the matters of religion; and that is, " when they express themselves in an improper or indecent manner, and especially in such a way as is unnatural and uninstituted, foolish and ridiculous, savage and barbarous, contrary to the dictates of reason and human nature, or the word of God." Take, for instance, some of the persecutors and idolaters, the bigots and enthusiasts of the church of Rome. And I wish such persecution and bigotry, enthusiasm and idolatry, were never found among any other sects of christians.

1. With what furious and burning barbarity do popish persecutors express their zeal for their religion! They arm their tongues and their pens with bitter reproaches, and gall against those who divide from their communion, and would reform their gross corruptions; and they still profess it is out of love to Christ, and to the souls of men, that they imprison, cut, burn, torment, and destroy their fellow-christians. *O my soul, come not into their secrets,* nor learn such unrighteous and bloody zeal!

2. Survey popish idolaters. They imagine they can never shew their affectionate devotion to Christ sufficiently, without making images of a crucified man, and placing them continually in their sight, in order to pay their worship to Christ by those unappointed mediums. Sometimes they wear these little idols in their bosom, near their heart, and then they think they manifest how much their heart loves him. They kiss these wooden baubles, or their silver figures, with a strange childish fondness, and sometimes bedew them with their tears, to shew their inward affection to Jesus, their Saviour. There may be much animal passion, much commotion of nature and the flesh in these practices, with very little spiritual love. Sometimes they make pictures even of

God the Father, and then perform their devotions toward them with forbidden ceremonies, and break God's second commandment to express their love to him. Strange and preposterous expressions of love, to practise what he forbids so often in his word, and that upon severe penalties!

3. Turn your eyes now to the Romish enthusiasts. God forbid that I should so condemn all that are educated in that church, as though there was no sincere devotion among them, though the church itself is abominably corrupt: But it is well known, that when some of these devotees have fancied themselves possessed with such a sublime love to God, that they have thrown themselves into odd postures and strange disorders of body, and appeared more like distracted persons than sober christians, as though it must be something not human that must express their divine affections. Others have imagined they could never do nor suffer enough to manifest the inward fire of that love to God which dwelt in their heart, and they have contrived what torments they should inflict upon themselves, as they used to express it, for the love of God.

Others, to shew their sorrow for having offended him, have not only worn sackcloth upon their skin, but they have scourged themselves, till they have been covered with blood; they have bound themselves with vows to travel barefoot, and to make long and tedious pilgrimages to distant lands. Some have sent themselves to death by voluntary starving; others have tortured and destroyed themselves with excessive thirst; and either made their bodies miserable, or put an end to life to shew their love to God. These are wild and frantic superstitions indeed, extravagant methods of expressing any devout passion, and most of them utterly unlawful. Let us remember, that the religion which God teaches, has nothing in it contrary to the light of nature; nor must our inward piety break in upon the rules of reason and decency, when we would express it by any outward signs.

There are some religious affections, which are very properly expressed and manifested in the common way, whereby nature usually expresses those inward sensations of the soul. Godly sorrow naturally vents itself in groans and tears; *Psalm* vi. 6. Holy joy sometimes by a smile of the countenance, and often by the voice of sacred melody: And this not only appears in the example of the royal Psalmist, but in the precepts of the New Testament; Eph. v. 19. James v. 13. *If any be merry let him sing psalms.* Pious and earnest desires of the presence of God, and of his favour, are signified by stretching of the arm towards him, or lifting up the eyes and hands to him; *Psalms* lxviii. 31. and xxviii. 2. and cxxi. 1, 2. Repentance and shame is naturally signified by downcast eyes or blushing; *Luke* xviii. 13. *Ezra* ix. 6.

Some of the stronger outward appearances, and vehement tokens of inward holy passion, are indeed rather to be indulged in private than in public worship: But in all our behaviour in this respect, let us take heed that the inward affection is sincere, and is the real spring of all the outward signs and expressions. Let us see to it, that we indulge not that practice which our Saviour so much condemns in the hypocrites of his day; *Matt.* vi. 16. Let us make no sad faces, nor put on dismal airs, nor smite the breast with the hand, and disfigure our countenances, merely to make the world believe that we are penitents: Nor let us make ourselves remarkable in public and mixed company, by turning up our eyes to heaven, to tell the world how often we pray in the midst of our secular affairs; though secret prayer may and ought to be sometimes rising to God, and we may lift an eye to him, while we are among men: Nor in public worship

should we use frequent and loud groanings, to persuade our neighbours that we are more deeply affected with divine things than they; though devout affection will sometimes vent a groan or a sigh.

But above all, let us take heed lest we make use of these outward colours and forms of passion, to cover the want of inward devotion and piety. We should always make our religion appear to the world with a natural and becoming aspect; and in a decent dress to invite, and not forbid those who behold us. Let us take care that we do not disguise our holy christianity, nor make it look like an irrational thing, by unmanly or unbecoming sounds or gestures; lest we thereby expose ourselves to the charge of hypocrisy, and give up our holy profession to the ridicule and contempt of the profane world.

V. It is an irregular management in the affairs of religion, or an abuse of devout passions, " when we content ourselves with the exercise of these inward and affectionate sensations of the mind, while they have no influence on the holiness of our conversation." Consider, my friends, what were the passions made for? Not merely for the sensible pleasure of human nature, but to give it vigour and power for useful actions. I have but a poor pretence to be a sincere lover of Christ, if I rejoice to hear his name repeated often in a sermon, and say never so many affectionate things of him in the language of the book of Canticles, and yet take no care to keep his commandments: Whereas this is the appointed way wherein Christ has required his disciples to manifest their love to him; John xiv. 15. *If ye love me, keep my commandments;* chap. xv. 14. *Then are ye my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.* In vain do I pretend to pious sorrows, in vain do I mourn for some great and grievous sin, in my secret retirements, or in public worship, if my life be spent among the gay follies and vanities of the world; if I run into new temptations whensoever the world beckons to me, and follow every son of mirth that waves the hand of invitation.

True christianity, where it reigns in the heart, will make itself appear in the purity of life. We should always suspect those flatteries of affection, those sudden inward sensations of sorrow or delight, which have no power to produce the fruits of holiness in our daily conversation. *The fruits of the Spirit* are found in the life and the heart together, as they are described; *Gal.* v. 22. Love to God and man, joy in holy things, *peace of conscience,* and peace with all men, as far as possible, *long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,* that is, faithfulness, *meekness, temperance,* and particularly a crucifixion of all sinful affections. Let us never content ourselves with any exercise of lively devotion, unless we feel our corrupt affections in some measure subdued thereby.

O how shameful a sight is it, and what a reproach to the profession of the gospel, to see a christian just come from church and holy ordinances, where his devout affections have been raised, and immediately to find him breaking out into vain, earthly merriment, and carried away with idle and sensual discourse! What a scandal is it to our religion, to see some zealous professors coming down from their closet, where they fancy they have been favoured with holy raptures, and enjoyed much converse with God; where they think they have exercised repentance and love, and holy desires, and yet immediately fall into a fit of rage against their servants or children for mere trifles, and express their wrath in very unchristian language and indecent behaviour. This is an open contradiction to their profession; and the shop, and the parlour, or perhaps the kitchen, gives the lie to the pretences of the closet. O glorious evidence of a disciple of Christ, where all the pious passions join to resist every temptation! Where divine love keeps warm at the

heart, where it purifies the whole behaviour, and exalts the life of men near to the life of angels!

VI. That must certainly be a culpable conduct, with regard to our religious affections, "when they are suffered to entrench upon other duties either to God or man, and withhold us from the proper business of our place and station in the world." Though devout passions should be indulged at proper seasons, yet they should not so far govern all the powers of nature, and engross the moments of life, as to make us neglect any necessary work, to which the providence of God hath called us.

This is the case, when persons find so much sweetness in their religious retirements, that they dwell there too many hours of the day, and neglect the care of their families, the conduct of their children and servants, and other necessary duties of life, and let all things run at random in their household, under the excuse of religion and converse with God: Though I must confess this is so uncommon a fault in our godless and irreligious age, that it may almost pass without censure.

It is the same culpable conduct, when christians experience a sacred and affectionate relish of public ordinances, and they are tempted to run from sermon to sermon, from lecture to lecture, in order to maintain their spiritual pleasure with a slight and careless performance of relative duties. It is yet more criminal in persons of low circumstances in the world, who would spend all their time in hearing or reading good things, or at some religious assemblies or conferences, while they grossly and grievously neglect their common duties of providing for themselves and their children. They are ready to expect, that the rich should maintain them, while they make their devout affections an excuse for their shameful idleness and sloth. Let us remember there is a time for working as well as a time for praying, or hearing: *Every thing is beautiful in its season;* Eccles. iii. 11.

This sort of excessive and irregular affection appears also eminently, when, out of pity to the poor, or love to the public worship of God, dying persons leave vast legacies to the building of churches and hospitals, and endow almshouses liberally, while their near kindred, and perhaps their own descendants, are in a starving condition, or want the conveniencies of life. He that takes no care of his nearest relations living or dying, is in that respect *worse than an infidel.* God does not love *robbery for burnt-offering*, nor does he permit us to abandon our natural affection to our fellow-creatures, to shew our love or zeal for our Creator in such instances as these:

VII. Religious passion is then certainly exercised in a very irregular and criminal manner, "when we suffer it to degenerate into carnal and vicious affections, and, as the apostle expresses it in another place, when we *begin in the Spirit*, and *end in the flesh;* Gal. iii. 3. Examples of this kind are too common in the present age of christians.

1. Zeal may turn into wrath and fury. A high veneration for the glorious truths of the gospel, and a warm zeal for the defence of them, has too often degenerated into malice and indignation against those who differ from us in religious sentiments; and that too in matters which are of small importance to practical godliness. Pious zeal against dangerous errors is a just and laudable thing, when it carries moderation and good temper with it, and does not break out into wrath and malignity against the persons of those who are unhappily betrayed into those mistakes: But it becomes a guilty passion, and hateful in the eyes of God our Saviour, when it breaks all the bonds of charity and christian love. The flaming bigot and the persecutor come in naturally at every turn,

for their share of this caution and reproof, as abusers of the passions in the things of God and religion.

When we come sometimes into worshipping assemblies, where a man of burning zeal leads the worship, we find the wildfire of his own passions spreading through the whole congregation. Is it not a shameful thing to hear the preacher railing against his brethren, because they differ a little from him, and will not use some unscriptural modes of expression, or will not admit some favourite explications of a verse of scripture, or will not consent to practise some lesser forms and rites of worship? And it is a matter of equal shame to see many persons, who imagine themselves to be christians of the first rank, take a malicious pleasure to hear such scurrilous reproaches and public railings against their fellow-christians, and curses denounced against them, because they differ in ceremonies and phrases. And the crime is certainly the greater, if these opinions and forms, wherein they disagree, are but of small importance. This is a wretched abuse of passion in the things of God; and yet so *deceitful is the heart* of man, and so given up to self-flattery, that perhaps both the preacher and the hearers vainly presume they are expressing a sacred love for divine truth, and paying sublime service to God, and their Saviour. What madness is mixed with mistaken zeal!

2. There is another instance of the abuse of the passions, which is very near akin to this, and may stand next in rank; and that is, when we behold the vices of men with holy aversion and hatred, and immediately transfer this hatred to their persons, whereas we ought to pity and pray for them: Or when we see a fellow-christian fall into sin, and because we hate the sin, we hate the sinner too, and suffer our hatred to grow into disdain and irreconcileable enmity, and that even though the offender has given signs of sincere repentance. This is not christian zeal, but human corruption; and such criminal indulgence of the passions, which ought to be mortified, if ever we would be imitators of the holy Jesus: He hated even the least sin, but loved and saved the greatest of sinners, and delighted to receive penitents to his love.

3. It is a culpable exercise of the passions, when holy emulation degenerates into envy. At first we admire the virtues of others, we respect their persons highly, we imitate their conduct, and aspire after the same degrees of piety and goodness; we have a holy ambition to equal them in every grace, and in every virtue, and if possible to exceed them; all this is right and worthy of praise; but when I fall short of the attainments of my neighbour, and envy him on the account of his superior character; when I feel an inward displeasure against my brother, because his gifts or graces shine brighter than mine, then the holy affection degenerates, and becomes a *lust of the flesh*, instead of a *fruit of the Spirit*.

4. I might give another instance also of this kind; and that is, when love to fellow-christians begins on a spiritual account, between persons of different sexes, and there is a mutual delight in each other's company and pious conversation; but without great watchfulness, this christian love may be in danger of degenerating into vicious desires and corrupt passions.

5. It may be worth our notice also, that there is another danger of the degeneracy of a devout passion, when persons of a pious and cheerful spirit have taken great delight in singing the praises of God, and meet together at the stated seasons for this purpose; but in time, this has sensibly sunk into the pleasure of the ear, into a mere natural relish of harmony, and delight of sounds well connected. This may have easily happened, when

fine instruments of church music have been used to assist psalmody, or when persons pride themselves in too nice and delicate a skill in singing, in too exquisite a taste in harmony, even though the words which they sing may be holy and religious.

To guard against these dangers, let christians frequently enter into their own hearts, and endeavour, as far as possible, to examine their spirit and conscience, to distinguish between their inward workings of piety, and the mere exercises of animal nature, or the workings of corrupt affection, and set a constant guard upon their hearts in this respect.

VIII. The last thing I shall mention, wherein some christians are guilty of an irregular conduct, with regard to their affections in matters of religion, is this; "when they live entirely by their devout passions, and make these the only rules of self-enquiry concerning their temper, their habitual state of soul, and their present frame of spirit, and concerning every thing that belongs to their christianity." Such persons have little regard to the growth of their knowledge, the improvement of their understanding in the things of God, the steady and fixed bent of their will toward religion, and the constant regular course of a holy conversation. They seem to make all their religion consist in a few warm and pious affections. There are two sorts of persons subject to this mistake.

1. Awakened sinners, who feel their passions of fear and desire excited by some convincing sermon, or awful providence, and the rich doctrines of grace suited to their case and state, raise in them some hopes of heaven, and sensitive commotions of joy. This may continue for many months, and incline them to infer that they are converted from sin to God; and being also in a great measure reformed in their lives, they imagine they are new creatures, and all is safe for eternity: Whereas they never had a heart fixed in the love of God, and in the hatred of every sin; they never became hearty and resolved christians; and in a little time their devout passions die, and all their religion vanishes, for it had no root.

2. There are also some real converts, who are but weak, and live too much by their passions. If their hope, and desire, and delight, are but engaged and raised high in their secret retirement, or in public worship, then they are good christians indeed, in a heavenly state, and they think exceeding well of themselves: But if at any time there is a damp upon their passions, through the indisposition of their animal nature, when they feel not a great degree of animal fervour powerfully assisting their pious exercises, they are ready to pronounce against themselves; they sink into great despondencies, and imagine they have no true grace.

Such christians as these live very much by sudden fits and starts of devotion, without that uniform and steady spring of faith and holiness, which would render their religion more even and uniform, more honourable to God, and comfortable to themselves. They are always high on the wing, or else lying moveless on the ground: They are ever in the heights or the depths, travelling on bright mountains with the songs of heaven on their lips, or groaning and labouring through the dark vallies, and never walking onward, as on an even plain, toward heaven.

There is much danger, lest such sort of professors as these two, which I have mentioned, should deceive themselves, if not in judging of the truth of their graces, yet, at least, in their opinion of the strength or weakness of them, for they judge merely by their affections. Let us watch against this danger, and remember, that though the passions are of excellent use in religion, yet they were never designed to stand in the place of reason and judgment, or to supply the room of an enlightened understanding, a

sanctified will, and a conversation attended with all the fruits of holiness. Thus I have finished what I designed to say concerning the abuse of the passions in religion. The remarks which I shall make on this head of discourse are these three:

I. "Those christians are best prepared for the useful and pious exercises of their passions in religion, who have laid the foundations of it in a regular knowledge of the things of God." Let your understanding, therefore, be fully persuaded of the necessity and excellency of religion, of the duties you owe to God, as your Maker and Governor; let all your reasoning powers be convinced of the evil of sin, of the holiness and justice of God, of the danger of eternal death, of the relief and hope that is held forth in the gospel of Christ, of the necessity of faith and holiness, in order to eternal happiness; and amidst all the workings of devout affections, maintain a constant exercise of your reason and judgment. The scripture itself was not given us to make the use of our reason needless, but to assist its operations, and to render it more successful in our enquiries into the things of our everlasting welfare. Knowledge and affection should go hand in hand in all the affairs of religion: The more we know of God, and the things of the upper world, we shall have the stronger spring for our holy passions, and a more secure guard against any excesses and irregularities in the exercise of them.

II. "As it is the business of a preacher to assist the devout passions, so it is part of his work to guard his hearers against the abuse of them." We have granted and maintained, that it is the business of every sacred orator to raise the affections of men toward the things of God: Let him therefore manage his divine arguments, in such a manner, as to awaken the fears, the hopes, the desires, the penitent sorrows, and the pious joys of the whole assembly, in a sublime degree; but, in order to secure them from excesses and irregularities of every kind, let him lay the foundations of their religion in clear ideas of divine things, and in a just and proper explication of the holy scriptures.

When he has a mind to lead his hearers into any particular religious sentiments, which he firmly believes to be true, and which he supposes useful to their edification, let him not begin with their passions, and address himself to them in the first place: He must not artfully practise upon these warm and animal powers, before he has set these doctrines or sentiments of his in a fair and convincing light, before the eye of their understanding, and their reasoning faculties: The affections are neither the guides to truth, nor the judges of it; nor must the preacher set them to their sprightly and fervent work, till he has informed the mind by clear explication and sincere argument. The sun in the heavens gives us a fair document in this case: His light comes before his heat: The dawn of the morning grows up by degrees, and introduces the fervours of noon. So let the preacher diffuse his light over the assembly, before he kindle their warm affections. Let him convince their reason and judgment of the truth of every article of religion, which he persuades them to believe; let him shew the duty and the necessity of every part of holiness, which he prescribes for their practice. Let him imitate that noble pattern of divine oratory, Apollos at Ephesus, who *was an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, he was fervent in spirit,* and could raise the passions of those that heard him, yet he was willing to kindle the flame of his own oratory by the light of his own understanding, and when he himself *had learned the way of God more perfectly, he mightily convinced the* Jews by divine argument, *and shewed them by the scriptures, that* Jesus *was the* Christ; *Acts* xviii. 24, 28. Then there was a proper way made for his following zeal and fervour to display themselves.

III. If the passions are of such eminent service in religion, and yet they are in danger of unruly excesses, "how much need have we to beg earnestly at the throne of grace, that they may be all sanctified?" It is only the sanctifying influence of the blessed Spirit, that can excite them in a due degree, and can give them proper limits and regulations. It is nothing but divine grace can raise them to a due height on all just occasions, and yet preserve them from any irregular conduct and unhappy effects.

In this sinful state of corrupt nature, we are averse to the things of God: Our passions are violent toward sensible objects, but are hardly moved by the most important discoveries in religion. It is God alone who can correct and change their corrupt bias, and give them a divine tendency. They are so ready to take a wrong turn, and sometimes to make wide mischief, even in the matters of religion, that God alone can keep them constant in their right situation and course. They are living wheels of strong and powerful movement in human nature, but they make wretched work if they are not put in motion by a regular and happy spring. They are glorious and noble instruments of religion, when under good conduct, but they are ungovernable and mischievous powers when they go astray; and they are also too prone to wander from their proper place and duty. Let it, therefore, be the matter of our daily prayer, that we may be "sanctified throughout in body, soul, and spirit;" 1 *Thess.* v. 23. and that every faculty of our nature may lend its proper aid to the kingdom of grace within us, till we are trained up by the piety of this present state, and made fit for the unknown exercises of a sublimer sort of devotion in the kingdom of glory.

Meditation. "What a wide and unhappy ruin has the fall of man spread over all the powers of our souls! Our understanding is darkened, our will grown perverse, and our passions corrupt and irregular in their exercises; and even when they are engaged about the things of God, their conduct is not always wise and holy. We have seen what glorious instruments they are, when managed by the hands of divine grace, to promote piety and goodness: But if they are left to themselves, they will sometimes make wild mischief, even in the sacred concerns of religion.

"Guard and secure me, O my God, against those false lights which my affections may cast upon the objects I converse with, and so delude my judgment. Suffer me not to be imposed on by the false colours, in which my passions may happen to dress up error, and make it look like truth. Let my judgment be always directed steadily by the reason of things and the discoveries of thy word, and not by the delusive flatteries of the passions. Let me remember that these were not given for my guides in the search of duty or truth; they were not made to teach me what is false and what is true, but to awaken me with the greater zeal to pursue truth, and to practise whatever I learn to be my duty.

"May I be so happy as always to lay solid reason and scripture for the foundation, whence my devout affections may take their rise, and ascend high toward God! Let them never flutter in the dark, nor break away from the government of my understanding; that if, at any time, my conscience calls me to account for the warmest and boldest flights of my pious affections, I may be able to support and justify them all upon the foot of reason, and by the divine examples and encouragements of the word of God.

"If, at any time, my zeal has been too fervent about the lesser matters of christianity, while it has been cold and listless in the things of the highest importance, I would take

shame to myself in the sight of God and men. Blessed Jesus, never suffer my anxieties, my fears, my desires, and my joys to rise, but in due proportion to the worth and importance of their objects. Let my name never be numbered among those men of irregular zeal, who *strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel;* Matt. xxiii. 24. When I read or hear of the idolaters and the bigots of the church of Rome, in what a strange childish manner, and with what ridiculous fopperies they express their love to God and Christ, and to saints departed; when I read how they scourge their bodies to shew their sorrow for sin, and put their flesh to torments which God never appointed nor required; when I have been told how they cut and burn and destroy their fellow-christians, animated by a supposed zeal for God and his church, I bless God that I have been taught better methods of expressing my devout affections. *Come not, O my soul, into their secrets, to their assemblies be thou not united;* Gen. xlix. 6. Nor let my religion make me sour and unsociable; nor let me indulge awkward gestures, or put on a distorted countenance, nor appear with any unmanly or unbecoming airs, to express the inward workings of my heart. I am afraid of all those outward forms which would turn piety into contempt before an ungodly world, who take all occasions to ridicule things sacred.

"I would remember that religion does not consist in a warm flash of affection, or in sudden efforts of devout joy, where holiness has no settled root in the heart, nor any visible fruits in the conversation. Let me be all of a piece, and if my christianity raises my pious passions in the church, or in the closet, may the same christian spirit be found in all my daily behaviour: May it regulate my words, and adorn my actions, that God, angels, and men may see the golden thread of religion running through my heart and life, in a uniform manner, in all times, places, and stations. Never let my devotions break in upon any part of other necessary duties which I owe to God or man: The great God does not permit sacrifice to stand in the room of works of mercy, nor will he allow of *robbery for a burnt-offering*. Remember this, O my soul!

"Help me, O my God, to keep up my pious affections to their own character, and let them not degenerate into a vicious or criminal temper of mind. Suffer not my zeal against error to turn into fury against a mistaken brother. Teach me to pity the man, while I endeavour to cure his unhappy mistakes by the only methods which Christ has appointed, by gentle reasoning, by arguments drawn from scripture, by the winning arts of love and goodness, and by earnest prayer for his recovery from the error of his way. Let me watch against every instance wherein holy affections may be corrupted, and turned into vice or folly.

"Though I desire to have my passions deeply tinctured by the things of God, yet I would not live entirely by the efforts of devout passion, nor judge of my state and frame merely by these sorts of emotion. It is possible that sudden flashes of affection may sometimes deceive our judgment, and make us determine suddenly and unjustly, concerning ourselves and our state godward. Let my religion and love to God be deeply rooted in the mind, and in the principles of solid knowledge; let my will be strongly and unchangeably inclined towards God and things heavenly; and let my love and hope, my desire, my sorrow, and my joy, be all awake and engaged, in proper seasons, to promote the divine work within me, and make blessed advances daily toward the world of perfection." *Amen.*

DISCOURSE VI.

THE AFFECTIONATE CHRISTIAN VINDICATED, AND THE SINCERE SOUL COMFORTED UNDER HIS COMPLAINTS OF DEADNESS, &c.

WE have seen what are the various advantages that may be derived from the exercise of the passions in the concerns of religion; and we have taken notice of the irregularities to which they are liable, and have endeavoured to guard against the abuse of them. We proceed now to the fifth general head of discourse which was proposed, and that is, to vindicate the affectionate christian from the unjust reproaches of men, in his warmest exercises of love to God and devotion. Surely one would think there appears sufficient reason for pious souls to indulge their most lively affections in worship, and that without any abuse of their reason, or abasement of their religion. These inward sensations of holy delight, these secret joys which a stranger intermeddles not with, these experimental parts of godliness may be set in a rational light, and be justified to the understanding of men. What is there in all this account of a christian's love to God, and the regulated exercise of pious passions, that is not agreeable to solid reason, and to the natural notions that we have of God and our duty, as well as to the brighter discoveries we have by divine revelation? What is there in all these workings of a holy soul, but what is the just and proper result of the nature of man, as an inferior spirit, in the present circumstances of flesh and blood, meditating on God, the infinite and supreme Spirit, with a lively hope of his favour and acceptance?

Will the deist and the infidel tell me, that "this is all mechanical religion, the mere effect of animal nature, the visionary scenes of fancy, and the boilings of a warm imagination?" Will they laugh at all this account, and say, "there is nothing in it but the passionate ferments of flesh and blood, which we mistake for a reasonable religion and worship?" I would enter the lists with them, even upon the foot of reason, and justify these sensations of experimental christianity, by a few plain and gradual steps of argument.

1. Is not the great God the Creator and supreme Governor of all things? Is he not the most glorious and most excellent Spirit? Is he not a Being of infinite majesty, of holiness, and of mercy? Is he not a God of awful sovereignty, a wise ruler, and righteous judge? Is he not kind and compassionate toward his humble and obedient creatures? Is he not a fountain of eternal blessedness, and an all-sufficient and everlasting good to those that seek and serve him? Is he not a God that hath terrors to vindicate his government, and to punish those that break his law? Is not this the God that the wiser and better sort of heathens acknowledged, and do acknowledge, as well as the christians?

2. Is not the mind of man made capable, in some measure, of knowing this God? And are we not bound to acquaint ourselves with him? Is not man therefore bound to get these notions and ideas of the attributes of God his Maker represented to his mind in the truest, the fairest, and the strongest light? Or are the faintest and the feeblest notions of our Creator the best? Are we not under an obligation sometimes to recollect these ideas

of God; when we come to converse humbly with him! Should we not endeavour to bring them fresh and strong into our memory, and to make his majesty and his mercy, as it were, present to our souls, by the fullest and brightest conceptions we can form, when we come to worship before him, when we address him with prayer for any blessing that we want, or when we praise him for any mercies we have received from him!

3. Ought not this knowledge, this holy remembrance of God, to influence the other powers of our nature? Doth not conscience itself tell the deist, that his own sentiments of so glorious a Being demand his highest honour, and his humblest worship? Do not his own thoughts require of him a behaviour agreeable to all those high conceptions which he hath of the perfections of the divine nature! Are not our minds bound to think of him with high esteem? Are not our wills bound to resolve upon obedience to this wise and holy Governor, and to submit with patience to all his providences? Are not our eyes made to contemplate his works, and ought we not to give him the honour of his wisdom and power, that formed this world of wonders which our eyes behold? And are not our tongues obliged to speak honourably of him, and to render him a just revenue of praise? Is it not our duty to offer the tribute of our lips in thankfulness for a thousand blessings we receive from his bounty and beneficence.

4. Are not our passions or affections a particular power of human nature that owes God some honour as well as the understanding and will, the eyes and the tongue? Were not these affectionate powers made to be excited by thoughts of the mind, and to be exercised agreeably to the judgment and conscience? Or are the passions the only powers of our nature that owe no homage to the God that made them, and must not be employed in his service? Many of the affections are pleasing to nature in their various exercises, and can they not have leave to be employed in piety? Must religion be made so dry and tasteless and melancholy a thing as to forbid all pleasure? Have we not permission to love God, the most amiable Spirit, whose perfections and glories surpass all created beings? Must we never take delight in God, the Author of our nature, and the source of eternal blessedness? Is religion the only thing whence all pleasing affection must be for ever banished and excluded! And must I withhold all these pleasant and powerful sensations of nature from intermingling with the things of God? Hath my wise and merciful Creator given me such a faculty as admiration, and may I admire the heavens and the earth, the fishes, the beasts, and the birds, and not admire that all-wise and almighty Being that made me and them? May I lay out my wonder on any thing or on every thing besides the great God, who created all these wonders? Hath he formed my soul to delight and love, and hath he confined these sweet and pleasurable capacities only to be employed about creatures, when the Creator himself is infinite and supreme in loveliness? Will not this most amiable of Beings expect that I should love himself, and give me leave to make him my delight? Is it lawful for me to fear a lion or an adder, a whirlwind or a flash of lightning, and may I not indulge a holy and solemn dread of that glorious Being that made lightnings and whirlwinds, adders and lions, and has unknown thunders in reserve for profane sinners? Doth he give me leave to mourn and weep for the loss of my ease, or my health, or my friends, and may I never indulge my sorrow to arise for all my multiplied offences against his law, my former rebellions against his government, and my refusals of his grace? Thus far I have begged leave for the passions to assist religion, and I think reason gives an ample permission. But I may rise to bolder language here, and pronounce my argument with stronger force, if I should resume the first part of this head of reasoning, and make

all these enquiries turn upon the point of obligation and duty. Since I know this God to be infinite in goodness, and the author of all my comforts, am I not bound to love him with all my strength, and with all my soul? If he is a Being of sovereign power, holiness and justice, ought I not always *to fear before him*, and to grieve heartily that I have offended against his holy laws? Is it not my duty to mourn for sin, and to be ashamed of my unnatural and unreasonable conduct? And doth not God require that I should rejoice before him with thankfulness, when I have some hope that he hath accepted my submission, pardoned my sin, and holds me in his favour and love?

But let me proceed yet farther in this argument, and say, have not my passions themselves been too often engaged in folly and sin? And must they do nothing for the interests of religion and virtue? Hath not the great and blessed God been affronted and dishonoured by these warm and active powers of my nature? And may not he make some reprisals on them, by leading them captive by his grace, and devoting them to his own service? Must the passions, which have been defiled with so much iniquity, and which have helped to defile the soul, never be refined? Never be sanctified? Never attempt to restore that tribute of honour and obedience to the great God, of which they have long defrauded him? Have I loved vanity? Have I delighted in sin? Has my desire, my hope and my joy, been heretofore employed on criminal objects? And must these affections of desire and hope, of love and delight, be forbid to pursue objects divine and heavenly, and be for ever excluded from all pious employment? Have I grieved for the loss of a sinful pleasure, or *been angry with my brother*, and hated him *without a cause?* And ought I not to turn the stream of my wrath and hatred against my sins, and to give a loose to the passion of grief and pious sorrow for my guilty behaviour toward God and man? Are these faculties of my nature capable of sinning only, and incapable of practising virtue and goodness? Or is it not lawful to attempt to employ them in the service of religion? Let the deists, and the men of cold philosophy, tell me, that virtue and piety, and goodness, consist only in sublime ideas of God, and in a will devoted to him; and that it is only the pure affections of the mind or spirit that are to be exercised toward God and religion; but the motions of flesh and blood must have nothing to do here, nor passions of the animal have any part or share in the religion of the man. To such objectors I would reply thus:

5. Is it possible that the purest affections can be exerted in any vigorous efforts in our present state of mortality, but flesh and blood will feel and follow them a little? Can these sublime ideas of the blessed God, and these pure and spiritual affections, be raised to any high degree, but the powers and passions of animal nature will be suitably touched and moved, at least in some degree, according to the natural temper? All persons are not equally capable of warm affection, and vigorous ferments of blood: But there is not a son or daughter of Adam without some degree of these natural emotions. They have been felt by wise and holy men, that have lived in all ages of the world; and it must be so, in some measure, while we are such a composition of flesh and spirit?

I grant, indeed, that some such cold and indifferent worshippers as can make this objection, whose religion consists only in a philosophical thought of the great God, and a devout wish perhaps once in a week or two, may not feel any of these sensible effects in animal nature. Those also may be excepted who are brought up in a mere round of forms, and never say their prayers but at the sound of a bell and a public hour; I

except also those popish devotees, who mutter over their Latin service, their "paternosters" and "ave-marias" by tale, and drop their beads to count their prayers right, and to secure themselves from mistaking the number. All these sorts of worshippers may join in the same opinion, and renounce their affections in their religion, and that for this reason, because they have not religion enough to employ them. But where a constant and supreme love to God is the real spring that moves us to our duties, the rest of the natural passions will have some correspondent share in the work. And it is a very false way of judging for these kinds of people, to compare all men with themselves, and make their cold indifference and their lazy practice the standing model of the religion of all mankind.

Let us suppose for once, that we were confined to the mere religion of nature; hath it not been sufficiently proved, that reason and the light of nature provide for the passions some share of employment, even in natural religion? And it is to be feared, that it is not merely the unbelief of christianity, but the want of serious inward religion of any kind, that inclines the infidels of our age to oppose and ridicule the exercise of devout affection. Is not the book of Psalms a noble and sublime collection of lyric poesy? Are not several parts of these sacred odes confined to such notions and practices in religion, as the light of nature and reason dictates? Now if these persons had true piety at heart, one would think they should rejoice in these sprightly and pious composures, and use them as a help to raise their souls to God, their Creator, in love and praise. Will they make this excuse, that the language is too warm, too much animated and pathetic, that there is too much of the beauty of metaphor, too many bright images that strike powerfully upon the passions, whereas the religion of nature, in their opinion, is a more calm and sedate thing? Surely it is much to be feared and suspected, that their prayers and their praises, and all their pretences to piety, will go but a little way to raise their souls to heaven, when their modes of worship cannot bear the language of such devout affection, and admit of no elevations above calm ideas and sedate indolence.—But I return to my vindication of the affectionate christian, in his warmest exercises of devout passion.

I might proceed much farther on this point, and say, when the affections are impressed and awakened to a powerful exercise by divine truths, will not these lively powers have a farther and a reflexive influence on the mind and the will? Do they not sensibly impress the ideas of divine things with much stronger force on the mind? Do they not set all the affairs of religion in a more lovely and attractive light? Do they not confirm the will in all its holy resolutions for God and heaven? Have they not often been found to stamp divine things on the memory and conscience with more lasting efficacy? Do not the devout passions awaken the latent images of fancy, and dress all the chambers of the soul with divine ideas and ornaments? And have they not by this means assisted the soul to maintain its constant converse with heaven? Is it not in the power of the sacred passions to raise and brighten the language of the tongue, as well as command the tears of the eyelids and the smiles of the countenance? Are not our hope and our fear given us to be living spurs to duty, and wakeful guards against temptation and disobedience; and do they not often employ the hands and the feet, direct the eyes, and awaken the voice? Will not holy love and joy give a lively and pleasing motion to the blood and spirits? And the hope of having sin forgiven, and our souls made for ever happy, excite a thousand pleasures in human nature? Will it not fill the soul with overflowings of gratitude, and make the lips abound in expressions of joy and praise? And will not these be

attended with a peaceful and pleasing aspect, and establish a sweet serenity in the heart and eyes? And all concur to maintain religion in the power and the joy of it?

Christians, be not afraid of professing the pleasures of religion? These men of pretended reason are vanquished at their own weapons, when they dare deride your converse with God, and fight against the inward power of your devotions. Be ye convinced therefore, and be established in this truth, that it is not the warmest exercise of our affections that can be ridiculous in religion, when they are excited by a just apprehension of divine things: But then it is, the passions are justly censured, when they are indulged to raptures in the confusion and darkness of the mind; when they flutter and make a tumult in the twilight of the understanding, or when they are raised high by mere enthusiasm and the visions of fancy, without the solid foundation of knowledge and judgment to support them, as I have shewn in a foregoing discourse.

Give diligence, therefore, O my friends, to improve in the knowledge of God the Father, and *in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ!* Maintain your humble converse with heaven, labour and strive in meditation and prayer, till you get near the seat of God, and find sweet access to his throne, through the blood of Christ and the aids of the blessed Spirit: Awaken all the springs of holy love and divine joy. These sacred pleasures will animate you to every duty, will be a guard to your souls against temptation, and give you courage to stand the ridicule of an unbelieving age: These divine refreshments, like the heavenly manna, will support your spirits through all the wilderness, and make your travels easy and delightful. These will lead you on with joy to *the promised land,* and prepare you to *dwell for ever* with that God, with whom you have here enjoyed so long and blessed a correspondence.—We proceed now to the sixth general.

Since it appears to be a matter of such importance to have the affections engaged in the affairs of religion, some humble and sincere souls may be ready to pronounce hard things concerning themselves, and conclude they have no true religion, because they feel their affections but little moved: We proposed, therefore, that the sixth general head of discourse should offer some "consolations to such honest and humble christians, who endeavour *to love* and serve *the Lord their God* with all their powers, but find very little of this exercise of the pious passions in comparison with what others feel." Let me address such persons as these in the following manner:

I. Since you doubt whether you *love God with all your heart,* that is, with your warmest affections, "search and enquire with holy fear, and with the greater diligence, whether you *love him with all your mind, with all your soul, and with all your strength.*" Do you *love him with all your mind?* Have you the highest esteem of him in your judgment as the most excellent and best of Beings, and as your only sufficient good? Do you *love him with all your soul?* Have you chosen him for your eternal portion both in this world and that which is to come? Is your will firmly resolved for God and religion? Are you sincerely willing to forsake every sin and to return to God, to give up yourself to him as your Lord and Ruler, and receive him as your God and reconciled Father, according to the discoveries of his grace in Christ Jesus? Do you love him with all your strength? Do you desire to obey and serve him all your days? Do you worship him with holy diligence, and promote his honour in the world, according to the utmost of your capacity?

If you find these things wrought in you, and done by you, you have abundant reason to take comfort in this evidence of your christianity. Where the mind and will are sin-

cerely engaged on the side of God and religion in this manner, the love of the heart is not utterly wanting; the affections must be in some measure sanctified, though perhaps you may not feel so frequent, so powerful, and so lively an exercise of them as other christians may enjoy. These things are a better proof of true faith and real piety, than a sudden flash of affection can be, where these more steady operations of the mind and will are wanting.

II. Though all the sons and daughters of Adam have some degrees of passion in their very frame and nature, yet remember that the temper of all men is not equally affectionate. Consider now and enquire, whether your temper has so much of these affectionate principles wrought in it as some of your neighbours may possess: There are some of a much calmer and more sedate constitution; their passions of desire and joy, of fear and hope, of sorrow and anger, are seldom moved about earthly things; and then it is no wonder that they are not so sensibly impressed with things heavenly. God requires no more than he gives; where he has wrought these pathetic principles in the constitution, he requires the exercise of them in the things of religion: But where persons are of a more dispassionate and a calmer frame, there God will require less of the sensible exercises of affection in the christian life. 2 Cor. viii. 12. *If there be a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man has, and not according to what he has not.*

I confess, if you have warm and lively passions for all other things, and none at all for God and religion and heavenly objects; if your fear, joy, sorrow, and desire are vigorous in their emotions, and are immediately raised by the affairs and occurrences of this life, and yet lie always asleep with regard to divine things, it is a very bad sign indeed, and has a very unfavourable aspect on the case of your soul: For *where much is given, much shall be required;* Luke xiv. 48.

III. "Consider what is your present stage of life: Are you in the flower of youth, when all the powers of nature are active, when the passions are warm and lively? Or are you in the decay of nature, and on the verge of life? Is old age coming upon you, or is it already come, when the animal powers are weakened, when the operations of flesh and blood are more languid?" An old man cannot have those lively passions and appetites with regard to sensible things as belong to the years of youth, and the vigour of nature. Old Barzillai could not feel his desires awakened and tempted to dwell at court by all the dishes of a royal table, or the sprightly music, or the rich entertainments there; 2 *Sam.* xix. 35. And therefore it is no wonder if the devout passions be then more languid and unmoved. An aged christian may have the most fixed resolution for God, and the firmest principles of piety rooted in his soul; he may do much service for God, and in this sense *may flourish and bring forth fruit in old age;* Psalm xcii. 14. and may have great advancements in real godliness, though there may be few such sensible evidences of it given to himself or to his neighbours, in the lively motion of his pathetic powers.

But, on the other hand, it is a very sad and melancholy symptom, if the evil passions of covetousness, of anger, of revenge, of envy, reign and exert themselves with violence in old age, while there is little or nothing of warm affection exercised in the things of religion.

IV. "Let humble and sincere christians remember also for their encouragement, that though spiritual things may be the chief object of our hope and desire, yet our passions may not always be so powerfully impressed by them, as they are by sensible and carnal things, and the reason is, because they are spiritual and invisible."

The passions which are wrought into our present frame, belong partly to animal nature as well as to the mind; and therefore the things of sense are nearer akin to them: They touch and strike our passions sooner, and awaken them to more vivacity, and engage them with more vehemence than things which are unseen. The passions are certain principles in man which depend much on flesh and blood; and therefore they are more naturally impressed by things that strike our eyes and our ears, and by them find a way to our hearts. It is possible that God and heaven may be really more beloved than men and this earth, though the animal powers of joy, hope, fear and desire, may not be so sensible and vehement in their operations toward spiritual, absent, and future objects, as towards things present and sensible. There is not therefore sufficient ground to conclude that we do not love God above creatures, because we sometimes feel the more passionate exercises and commotions of flesh and blood about creatures, than we do about God himself: And indeed were it not for this reasonable salvo, this spring of consolation, a multitude of christians would be ready to give themselves up to despair, and I doubt there would be very few of us who would not have reason to suspect the truth and power of our inward religion.

Yet I cannot conclude without this observation: In the last place, that "what comfortable evidences soever of our love to God may be derived from the high esteem of him in our minds, and the attachment of our wills to him, yet these evidences and comforts will be greatly brightened and increased by feeling the affectionate love of God in the heart." To love the Lord our God with all the mind, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, becomes more glorious when it influences the affectionate powers of the heart to join in the practice of religion.

It is granted, that the mere flashes of sudden passion in a devout moment, without a settled supreme esteem of God in the mind, without a firm attachment of the will to him, and careful obedience to his commands, will yield but small and feeble consolation in a time of trial and enquiry: The hearers who receive the word, like seed in stony ground, are said to receive it with joy, but their religion was but a flash; it endured but for a short season; it sprung up on a sudden, and quickly withered, because it had no root in the understanding and the will; *Matt.* xiii. 20, 21. Yet it is better, infinitely better, to find and feel that we love God with all our powers; we should therefore use all proper methods to stir up our drowsy affections, and engage them in divine things, that we may live in the pleasures of godliness, as well as in the power of it, and have our hopes rising high, and approaching to the joys of heaven, while we dwell here on earth. What these proper methods are, whereby the devout passions may be raised, will be the subject of our next enquiry.

Meditation. "It is strange that any person should cavil against the exercise of the warmest affections of man in the things that relate to the great God, and in matters of our own immortal interest. It is strange to hear any dispute arise against the engagement of our strongest and most sprightly powers in the service of the best of Beings, and our eternal friend. Oh! may I know him, and love him, and fear him, and delight in him, as becomes a creature to fear and to love a God, that is, in a supreme degree. In vain shall the world assault me with their keenest reproaches, in vain shall a bantering and godless age attempt to laugh me out of countenance for indulging the divine sensations of religion. Let them tell me, "It is mere animal nature, and the caprices of

flesh and blood," let them charge me with enthusiastical folly, and feverish heats of religion, I dare pronounce boldly, in the face of ridicule and scandal, that the prudent affectionate christian, in his devoutest hours, does nothing beneath the dignity of reason, nor unbecoming the character of the wisest of men. I have David and the prophets, I have Christ and his apostles engaged on this side of the question by their own practice, and I shall count it my honour to be an humble imitator of such blessed patterns.

" Oh! may I find the secret joys of religious retirement, joys which a stranger intermeddles not with! May I feel some pious affection animating me to all the duties of the christian life! May I see myself rising high above earthly things with holy contempt, mounting as on eagles' wings toward heaven; and then I shall not be frighted nor discouraged at all the arrows of reproach that are shot against me. The affectionate christian has much more reason on his side than all those indolent worshippers, those dry and joyless creatures, those cold pretenders to religion, who have renounced their affections in the things of God, and creep on at a low and grovelling rate, feeding only on some natural truths and speculations without life, power, or pleasure.

" But if I find my natural temper has very little of the pathetic composition in it, and that my affections by nature are not so vigorous as those of my neighbour; if I feel the more vehement efforts of love and fear, and holy sorrow, and pious pleasure, sink and decline, through the decay of nature or growing age, I will comfort myself with this, that it is the desire of my soul to have all its powers and passions engaged for God in their most vital and active exercises.

" If at any time I am so unhappy as to feel my affections exert themselves in a more vigorous manner towards the objects of flesh and sense which are present, than they do toward things absent, divine and heavenly, I would mourn over the frailty of human nature, in this present state, where we are so much attached to the things of this body. I will endeavour through divine grace *to love the Lord my God with all my mind, and with all my soul*, to raise him higher in the esteem of my judgment, to cleave to him more firmly by a resolute bent of my will, to abide daily with him, and live upon him, as my all-sufficient and everlasting good, that I may attain some comfortable establishment in the hope of his love: And when my flesh and heart, and all my animal powers shall fail me, I may still rejoice in having God for my God, who will be the strength of my heart, the life of my spirit, and my portion for ever;" *Psalm* lxxiii. 26. Amen.

DISCOURSE VII.

MEANS OF EXCITING THE DEVOUT AFFECTIONS.

WE are now come to the last thing designed in these discourses, and that is to propose a " few proper methods, whereby the affections of nature may be awakened and employed in the christian life." Take them in the following order:

I. See to it that the leading and ruling faculties of the soul, *viz.* the understanding and the will, be deeply and firmly engaged in religion. Let the mind be well furnished with divine knowledge, and the will be as resolutely bent for God and heaven. Where the understanding has but a poor and scanty furniture of the things of God, the pious affections will have the fewer springs to raise them: And if our ideas of divine things are obscure and confused, our passions are in great danger of running wildly astray, and of being led away by every delusion. Seek therefore not only a large and plenteous acquaintance with the things of God, but endeavour, as far as possible, to get clear and distinct conceptions of them, that the pious passions may have solid ground whence to take their rise. And then let your will be steadily set for God without weakness or wavering. If the resolves and purposes of the heart be feeble and doubtful, the affections will never rise to any high degree in a regular or lasting manner.

But I have said so much on these points that I shall not enlarge here. If the mind and will are sanctified, it is certain, according to the very frame of our natures, that the passions will in some degree follow the influence of these governing faculties. Why is it our passions are suddenly alarmed and so warmly influenced by the things of this world? It is because our minds have too high a value for them, our wills are too much attached to them, we place our happiness too much in them; *Matt.* vi. 21. *Where the treasure is, the heart will be also;* the heart with all its passions. Why are our desires, our longings, our fears and hopes, our sorrows, joys, and resentments so keen, and so intense about the things of life? It is because these things are too much esteemed as our treasure, our portion, our inheritance. If God be our portion, Christ our life, and heaven our inheritance and our home, then our *affections will be set on the things that are above, where Christ is at the right hand of God;* Col. iii. 1, 2.

II. " Engage the most powerful and governing passion for God, that is, the passion of love:" All the train of affections will obey its ruling power and influence, they will all follow its motions and sovereign dictates, as was made evident in the second discourse on this subject. And we have shewn you before, that in order to excite divine love in our hearts, we must meditate frequently on these things, *viz.* what the great and blessed God is in himself, what he has done for us, what he daily does for us, and what he has promised to do, both in this life and the life to come. Never be easy, or at rest, therefore, if you find your love to God flag and languish; for then the other affections will grow cold and lifeless in religion. Take all opportunities to warm your heart with this sacred passion, and to rekindle the fire of divine love within you, when at any time you find it declining.

III. " Watch carefully against the too strong attachment of your affections to creatures: Remember that this *world is at enmity with God;* James iv. 4. *If any man love this world, the love of the Father is not in him;* 1 John ii. 15. Where the love of the world is habitually prevalent, the love of God is not found; for God is the supreme good, and the most lovely of beings, and he counts that love as nothing which is not supreme. *No man can serve two masters. You cannot serve God and mammon;* Matt. vi. 25. that is, the true God and the god of riches: And we may say, by the same rule, you cannot love the true God and the god of honour and ambition, or the god of sensuality and carnal pleasure. A God carries a supreme idea, and demands all the soul. Not only unlawful objects and sinful pleasures, but even sensible delights, possessions, and enjoyments, which are lawful, take too fast hold on the heart, and draw it away from God. Remember that the creatures around you have this advantage, that while God is a spirit, an unseen being, the creatures are ever striking upon our eyes or ears; they are ever making their court to our senses and appetites, and have a thousand ways to insinuate themselves into the heart. The world, and the flattering enjoyments of it, are suited to work upon flesh and blood, and to draw off the soul from God its centre and its rest: They are ever near at hand on all occasions, and they are ready sometimes to say, *Where is your God?* Keep your God, therefore, always near you, and watch against the pleasing flattery of alluring creatures, lest your heart cleave too fast to them, and be thereby divided from your God.

Amidst all the endearing relations and engaging businesses of life, single yourselves as much as possible for God, and let not many things dwell too near your soul, lest you lose the sight of your heavenly Father, and the pleasing sensations of his love. Where the love of sensible things prevails, it draws with it all the long train of hopes and fears, of desires, joys, and sorrows! of painful heartaches, and fond wishes, and keen resentments. Thus the affectionate powers of nature are carnalized, are tinctured deep with the things of earth, and become too much estranged from God and heaven. Whensoever you find a tempting creature taking too fast hold of your passions, set a guard of sacred jealousy upon it; keep your heart at a holy distance from that creature, lest it twine about your inmost powers, and draw them off from their allegiance and duty to God your Creator. The love of God is a flower of divine original, and of the growth of paradise; if the Holy Spirit has planted it in your heart, let not any other love be planted too near it, nor too much nourished, lest it draw away the vital moisture, and cause the love of God to languish and wither.

IV. Be not slight and careless in secret religion. Let private devotion, reading, meditation, prayer, have a proper share of your time allotted them. In pious retirements you may indulge all the holy passions with much greater freedom: You may there give a loose to all the devout affections of the soul, in their warmest exercises and expressions: You may say a thousand things to God in secret, which are not proper for public worship: You may pour out your souls before him in the strongest and most pathetic sentiments of holy desire and divine joy: You may tell him all the inward pains of your conscience, the secret anguish and shame of your heart, because of your past offences; you may sigh deeply, and blush before him, and dissolve your eyes into tears: You may tell him in secret how intense are your desires to taste and be assured of his love, and to be formed after his image: You may rejoice in his sight with pious exultations and triumph, in hope of his eternal presence in the upper world. Such

exercises as these will keep all the passions in an habitual practice of religion, and maintain inward piety in the life and power of it.

V. Converse much with those parts of our holy religion, and with those books of scripture which are suited to awaken your warmest affections. Let your thoughts take occasion, from the various occurrences in nature and providence, to meditate on the glorious perfections of God, the wonders of his wisdom in contriving the several parts of the creation, so happily fitted to answer his great designs. Think on his amazing power, that could form all things by his word, and bring a whole world into being at his will. Awaken your souls, to admire the wide-spreading influence of his sovereignty and government, who manages the immense affairs of the upper and the lower worlds, the nations of men, and the armies of angels, and yet extends his care to every one of us in particular, and even to the meaner figures of flies and worms. Think on the infinite extent of his knowledge, that he is acquainted not only with every creature he has made, but with every thought that passes through our hearts, with all our most secret actions and purposes. This will awaken in you a holy fear of his majesty, and you will dread the thoughts of sinning against him, since it can never be concealed from his notice; and while you think on his omnipresence, you may rejoice in him as your guardian and defence through all times and places where or whensoever it is possible for danger to attend you. Meditate on his boundless goodness: Our *God is love*, and all nature is filled with the blessings of his bounty. He has overspread the skies with light, and covered the earth with food for man and beast. Of what a vast and surprising extent is the whole family of creatures which are maintained out of the stores of God! What a transcendent veneration should we have of that goodness which satisfies the craving appetites of millions daily and hourly!

Besides these general effects of the divine goodness, it is proper to have the memory furnished with particular instances of protections, deliverances, escapes from danger, rich and unmerited blessings, which we ourselves have enjoyed, that we may awaken our gratitude, rekindle our dying love, and exalt our hearts and our voices in praise. Nor is it less useful to meditate sometimes on the sins and follies of mankind, that we may admire the patience of a God so affronted and so abused: Nor is it less needful to recollect our own follies and our guilt, that we may keep holy repentance in its lively exercises; for the spring of godly sorrow should never be dried up while we dwell in these regions of sin and defilement. Then the astonishing designs of divine mercy towards guilty creatures call for a due share of our meditations: Designs of mercy in the heart of God, counsels of peace transacted with his Son Jesus Christ *before the world began*, in order to rescue mankind from the ruins of nature, and to raise up a chosen seed for his own glory out of the rebellious race of Adam.

Here the thoughts of a christian should spread themselves abroad, and give a loose to holy contemplation and wonder. Let us run back to ancient ages, and view Jesus the Son of God, *the brightness of his Father's glory*, in his pre-existent state of light and happiness, before he visited us in flesh; *Heb.* i. 3. There he dwelt in the *bosom of the Father*, before he made our world, or appeared in it: We should trace his various appearances to the patriarchs, and his conduct of the church through many ages, under the name of *the angel of God's presence*, under the character of *the King of Israel:* We should meditate on his wondrous condescensions to become incarnate, to dwell in such

feeble flesh and blood as ours is, to be compassed about with infirmities, to sustain perpetual labours and sorrows, fatigues and reproaches, through the course of a mortal life, to bear those unknown agonies in the garden, and on the cross, which were the price of our pardon, and the means of his atonement for our guilt. What amazing love is this! How divine! How unsearchable! It has *heights and lengths, and breadths and depths, in it, that pass all our knowledge;* Eph. iii. 18, 19. and demand our devoutest praises. Trace him then from the cross to the tomb, follow him through the regions of the dead, behold him in the power and glory of his resurrection, see him ascending on a bright cloud to heaven, attended *with the chariots of God,* which *are twenty thousand, even* unnumbered *thousands of angels;* Psalm lxviii. 18. view him *sitting on the right hand of God,* making intercession there for sinners, rebels, enemies, that they may be divinely transformed into saints, children, friends. Survey him at the head of all *principalities and powers,* ruling all things according to his Father's decrees, for the glory of his Father, and for his own glory, as well as for the eternal welfare of his church. What bright and vigorous contemplations, what entertaining ideas, what efforts of pious passion may be raised by a sanctified mind travelling such a spacious round of divine wonders!

Enter into yourselves, think what once you were, corrupt, abominable, unclean, unholy: Remember the distinguishing grace of God, whereby you were awakened to a sense of your sin and danger, and were taught to fly for refuge to Jesus, your all-sufficient hope. Think on your iniquities all pardoned; think of your garments and soul washed white in the blood of the Lamb; think on the powerful influences of the Spirit, that hath changed your vile nature, and made it holy, that has guarded you from a thousand temptations, and is training you up to everlasting blessedness. Which of the passions is there that would lie cold and silent under the lively sentiments of such a various and important scene of things.

But I proceed to the second part of this fifth direction, and that is, "we may have our devout passions quickened by converse with those parts of the Holy Bible which contain the most affecting subjects, and express them in the most pathetic manner." Read some of the wonders of mercy and love in the transactions of God with his ancient people, how he rescued them from the midst of barbarous nations and hostile armies; how he brought them out of bondage and brick-kilns, by a mighty and miraculous effort of power and grace; how he led them through seas dry-shod, and commanded rivers to cleave asunder, and leave a path for their march; how he visited them after by missionary angels, and sometimes in his own royal person; for *they saw the God of Israel;* Exod. xxiv. 10. Read and meditate the vengeance and the terrible destruction executed on the old world that was drowned in the flood; the deluge of wrath that fell on Sodom and Gomorrah, which perished by divine lightning; for *the Lord rained down fire and brimstone from the Lord out of heaven upon them;* Gen. xix. 24. Read the ten plagues of Egypt, and the desolations that were sometimes spread over rebellious Israel, and sometimes over the heathen nations by an angry God, in the writings of Moses, and the Book of Judges. Read the soft and melting language of divine mercy, inviting sinners to return to God by Isaiah, the evangelic prophet. Survey the promises that are big with blessings, that contain pardon, and righteousness, and grace, and life, and salvation, and glory in them; and let the pious affections of hope and love break out and diffuse them-

selves with sweet delight. Read the history of the life and death of our blessed Lord, which is made up of love and wonders, and look into some of the more affectionate paragraphs of St. Paul, and the pathetic parts of all the sacred epistles.

But above all, for this purpose, I must recommend the specimens of divine meditation and divine worship, the complaints, the supplications, and the songs of praise which are offered to God by holy men in the Old Testament and in the New. You find some of these in the books of Moses, Ezra, Job, Daniel, and other prophets; especially the Psalms of David: A rich and heavenly treasure is this; a repository, or an altar of sacred fire. The people of God, in all succeeding ages, have had recourse to it, both as an example and a spring of most lively and exalted devotions. Choose a psalm suited to your own case, and frame, and temper; compare your hearts with the Psalmist, and your circumstances with his; lift up your souls to God in the words of David, or imitate his language where his words do not so perfectly express your case. Enter into his spirit, form and model your pious affections by that illustrious pattern, and be sure to bring Christ and the sweet discoveries of grace, and the blessings of the gospel, into this sort of devotion. David himself, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, practised this, though in a more obscure manner, and in the style of prophecy: And if in the midst of such a dark dispensation, surrounded with types and shadows, we find surprising efforts of fear and love, of joy and wonder, of desire and hope, of faith and adoration, and praise, how unspeakably glorious and entertaining would it be to us, if we had a book of such holy melody, such harmonious worship, written by divine influence in the language of Christ and his gospel, interlined with the blood of the Son of God, adorned and enlivened with the grace and glory of a rising and reigning Saviour, and animated and enriched with the Holy Spirit, and the blessings of the New Testament? Perhaps this is too sublime a privilege, too high a favour for the church to expect or enjoy in this corrupted and degenerate state: Perhaps we must wait for such a seraphic volume till we are raised to join the songs and the harps of the heavenly Jerusalem; or at least till the happy *time of the restitution of all things*, when *a new heaven and a new earth* shall introduce such a state of things among men as shall be near akin to the glory of the upper world.

But it is time now to go on to the next particular:

VI. "When you find a devout passion arising in your heart, indulge and cherish it, if there be a convenient season." Take heed that you do not banish the holy thought, or suppress the sacred affection. Do not immediately plunge yourself, without necessity, into the businesses of life, or any vain amusements, lest you damp the wing of your holy desires, which would bear you upward to God; *quench not* those seeds of divine and heavenly fire which God has kindled in your souls. When the quickening Spirit takes hold of your heart, take care that you do not refuse to follow him: Resist not the motions of the blessed Spirit, lest he retire grieved, and it may be long ere he return; 1 *Thess.* v. 19. *Eph.* iv. 30. When the blessed God does, as it were, take you by the hand, and lead you aside from the world, to converse with himself; when your blessed Saviour doth, if I may so express, touch the springs of devotion within you, and as it were invite and beckon you to holy fellowship with him, have a care that you do not turn rudely away from him, and renounce his invitations. Let such sacred seasons, such heavenly moments, be duly valued and improved. Let pious affections be indulged and promoted, unless plain and necessary business call you away at that time to other engagements.

But if it should happen that the providence of God and your duty demand your

thoughts and your hands to be employed in secular affairs, when you feel a devout passion arising, you may in some measure remedy this inconvenience, by the following advice:

VII. "Endeavour to keep up a constant savour of religion in the midst of the businesses and cares of this life." While you are travelling through the wilderness of this world, walk always with God: *Do every thing in the name of God*, as under the influence of his command, and with a design for his glory: And let your soul go forth often towards him in short and holy exercises; this will keep the devout affections awake and active. If you have found God in the closet, or in the church, carry him with you into the things of the world, into the shop and the family, so far as a proper attention to your daily business will permit. Suffer no long intermissions of your heavenly work, lest your pious affections grow cold. Let your thoughts in short intervals of worship go out towards God. Never let an hour pass, if possible, without some devout aspirations towards heaven. In the evening watches, at midnight, and at the dawn of the morning, the holy Psalmist sent up his thoughts to God; and he was often breathing out his soul towards him amidst the affairs of the day; Psalm lxiii. 6. *I will meditate on thee in the night watches.* Psalm xxv. 5. *Thou art the God of my salvation, on thee do I wait all the day.* O blessed souls, who imitate the practice of that sublime saint, the *man after God's own heart!*

VIII. "Confine not your religion always to your thoughts." Sometimes, perhaps, *while you are musing, the fire will burn*, as David found it; *Psalm* xxxix. 3. *Then speak with your tongue* to God, or to man, as David did, who was most exquisitely skilled in all the holy methods of a devout life, and was the noblest pattern of sacred fervour. Gain some acquaintance with lively christians: Mutual conversation shall raise the divine flame higher, like united torches, which increase each other's blaze. Sharpen your desires, and kindle your hopes and joys, by mutual and holy discourse. Borrow a coal from the altar of the sanctuary, from the ordinances of public worship, and warm your own hearts, by endeavouring to warm the heart of your neighbour. Speak to one another of the heavenly world, till each of you find your wings stretched for the flight, and you long for the divine summons. Mix your flames of celestial love, as angels do, and let them spire upward, and point toward Jesus, your beloved. Man is a social creature, and his passions were made to be raised by converse. Break therefore through the reproach and shame of a degenerate age, and aspire to the life and discourse, and joy of angels.

IX. "Seek earnestly the influences of the quickening Spirit." *Without him you can do nothing.* It is the Spirit of God who raises dead sinners at first into a divine life, and he puts all the languid springs of life into new motion. Those vigorous and active powers of the soul, which have so strong an influence to promote the vivacity and beauty of true religion, are under his government, and they want a divine touch from his finger to quicken and accelerate their motions. It is he who awakens our fear, who excites our hopes, who kindles our love and desire to things holy and heavenly; and it is he who exalts our spiritual joys. How often does the pious Psalmist cry out for quickening grace in the cxix. Psalm, and for the continued influences of the Holy Spirit, in other parts of his devotional writings? The whole church prays for the same quickening operations, Psalm lxxx. 11. *Quicken us, O Lord, so will we call upon thee.* Let this be the matter of our daily and importunate requests to heaven. And let us remember too, that under the gospel, Christ is the spring of our life; he is appointed by the Father to bestow his Spirit: He himself is called our life; *Col.* iii. 3. He himself is a quickening Spirit;

1 *Cor.* xv. 45. All the principles of our holiness must be derived from him, as our head of vital influence.

X. The last thing I shall propose, in order to keep the devout passions awake and lively in religion, is to live much in the faith of unseen things, and to *die daily*. Set yourselves continually as on the borders of the grave and the invisible world: This was St. Paul's practice; 1 Cor. xv. 31. *I protest by our* rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus, our Lord, I die daily:* And his daily living in the views of death, had a happy influence to maintain his rejoicing in Christ. If you constantly look on yourselves as dying creatures, and place yourselves on the borders of eternity, you will then take leave daily of sensible things, and live by the faith of things invisible. You will then behold God as ever near you, God, the Judge of all, the everlasting hope and the portion of his saints: You will be very unwilling to have your heart absent from God, while you look at death as just at hand.

Then the blessed Jesus, both as a Saviour and as a Judge, will be much on your thoughts. "Am I ready to appear before my Judge? Have I any strong and secure evidences that Jesus is my Saviour?" Then the gates of heaven will be ever as it were open before you, and the glories of it always within your view: You will think much of the heavenly world, with all its holy inhabitants, with its divine enjoyments, with its everlasting freedom from temptation, and sin, and sorrow, with its delightful business, and its unknown pleasures.

Then this world will be as a dead thing in your eyes; it will have very little power to work on your passions, and to draw you aside from God: He will be your love and your all. The strength of faith and the views of death will command your fears, and hopes, and desires, and confine them to the things of religion. Then you will be ever solicitous to brighten your evidences for heaven, to keep your hopes firm and unshaken, by often reviewing the grounds and foundations of them: And your spirit will be solicitous to be found ready at all hours for the call and summons into the upper world. Every power of nature, and every passion will be kept in its right frame and posture, under the influence of such an expectation. You will hate every sin, and abhor the thoughts of it, lest your souls be defiled afresh, when they are just called to depart: You will keep your desires of God always warm, and set a guard on your love, lest it suffer any decay: You will raise your thoughts to a continual delightful converse with heavenly things, and enter into the spirit of joy and praise. O blessed souls, who daily practise this sort of departure from the body, and anticipate the pleasures of the heavenly state! Who love the blessed God, and delight in him here on earth, as far as mortality will admit, and are breathing after the more consummate holiness and joy of paradise! This was the frame and temper, this the devout language of Armelle Nicolas, a poor servant maid, who had spent more than thirty years of her life in the constant exercise of divine love. "God has not sent me," says she, "into this world but to love himself, and through his great mercy, I have loved him so much, that I cannot love him more, after the manner of mortals: I must go to him, that I may love him after the manner of the blessed."

Meditation. "I have learned so much of religion, as to know that it does not con-

* Most of the Greek copies, as well as our own translation, read it *your rejoicing;* but it is hard to make sense of it, without changing the word *your* into *our*, which in the Greek is but the small change of one letter; and one or more manuscript copies have the word *our*, and support this alteration.

sist in vehement commotions of animal nature, in sublime raptures and ecstasies: We may be sincere christians in the exercise of repentance and faith, and in the practice of holy obedience, without any overwhelming sorrows or transporting joys. Yet since the various affections of fear and hope, love and sorrow, desire and delight, belong to my nature, I am sure they ought to be all engaged in some measure in the service of God and religion: And I have been taught in this discourse by what methods it may be obtained. Let me now recollect these advices briefly, in order to practise."

And first, " I will endeavour that the ruling powers of my soul, the understanding and the will, be employed in these affairs of everlasting importance. O may my memory be richly furnished with treasures of divine knowledge; may I be fully convinced of the necessity and worth of true religion! May I have the most exalted esteem of God and things heavenly! May these be the objects of my dearest choice! May my will be firmly determined to fix on these as my highest portion, and my everlasting all? And can I go thus far without making God the supreme object of my love? Can I choose him with all his excellencies, his graces, and his glories, as my all-sufficient happiness, and live upon him as such, and yet not love him? I think this is impossible. Let me then cherish and improve this divine principle of love; and divine love will govern all the other passions of nature, will employ them in their proper work, and distribute to them their several offices in the religious life. Love is the sovereign and commanding passion. But what shall I do, O Lord, to love thee more? How shall I kindle this divine flame? How shall I nourish it and raise it high? I meditate on the wonders of thy nature, the extent of thy goodness, and the riches of thy mercy, and yet how little do I love thee? I review the sweet variety of blessings that I have received from thy hand in this life, and the surprising transactions of thy condescending grace, which relate to the life to come, ' and yet how little do I love thee?' I behold Jesus thy Son sent out of thy own bosom to take flesh and blood, and to dwell among sinners, even Jesus, the Son of thy highest love, sent down to earth to be made a sacrifice, and to die for the sake of such guilty wretches as I am, an amazing instance of thy love to us, ' and yet how little do I love thee?' I read in thy word what thou hast done for me in ancient times and ages, long before I was born; and what thou wilt do for me in worlds and ages beyond death and time, and yet I am ashamed to think ' how little I love thee?' My thoughts run from one eternity to another, and trace the various and transcendent wonders of thy love in the several periods of time; glorious and astonishing instances of the compassion of a God to a worthless creature, to a worm, to a dust, an atom of being, yea worse, to a sinner, a rebel that deserves thy immortal hatred, ' and yet how little do I love thee?' I wander in meditation through the various fields of nature and grace, and methinks I see my God in all of them, diffusing the unbounded riches of his wisdom and love through them all: I endeavour to take my warmest passions with me, while I rove among the unknown scenes of thy power and goodness, and yet, O my God, after all, I am forced to confess, ' how exceeding little it is that I love thee!' Lord, it is thy own work to turn a heart of stone into flesh, to make it feel all the tender impressions of divine love, and to kindle the celestial principle of life and love within me. Come down from on high, thou Sovereign of all Nature; come down into my heart, take possession of it for thyself, and let it ever burn and breathe towards thee, and send up the perpetual incense of holy desire and love.

" I will set a watch upon my eyes and my ears, and all the avenues of sense and appetite, that the creatures may not enter in too far, and dwell too near my heart, which I

have given up to God. I would place a sacred guard upon it, to keep off every rival. I know the danger that arises from the flattering objects of flesh and sense: If they but once gain admittance into the heart, they are ever busy to take too fast hold there. Many of the weeds of this wilderness have gay and flattering blossoms, and if once they are permitted to creep into the soul, they twine about every passion, and root themselves there, to the certain prejudice of divine love. Alas, for that holy plant! That flower of heavenly original! How the noxious weeds of this world choak its growth, and cause it to decay and languish! Oh! may all the tempting trifles and vain delights of this life stand aloof from my heart, for I have devoted it to God for a habitation. Keep your distance, ye dangerous creatures, from the gates of this temple where my God dwells. There let him dwell alone, and reign over all my powers for ever.

"I would seek after my God in his public ordinances; I would seek after him daily in my secret retirements; I would give my pious passions a greater loose where no eye beholds me, where no ear can take notice of me. Oh! may these retiring hours be the special seasons for the lively exercise and the increase of my devout affections! There I can tell my God all my heart in private groans and private rejoicings. He shall know what my sighs mean, what are my fears and my painful sorrows: There I can blush before him for my secret sins, and open the floods of holy mourning: There I can pour out into his ear my bitter complaints of the rising corruptions of my heart: I can lament over the vanity of my thoughts, and spread my unknown temptations before his eyes. I can lay myself low at his feet in the dust, and tell him with humble confusion of face and soul, how much I have received from him, how much I have done against him, and how little I have loved him.

"In these secret chambers of retirement, I may join the exercises of an active faith and a cheerful hope, with the sighs and tears of penitence: There I can breathe out my most vehement desires after the presence of my God, and after the sweeter sensations of his love. *My flesh and my heart may pant and cry out after God, the living God,* and say, *when shall I come and appear before him?* Psalm xlii. 1, 2. When shall I be made more entirely like him? When shall these days of sin and temptation, these tedious seasons of absence and distance from God, come to a final period, never, never to return again? The lonely and retired devotions of a christian may lead him near the walls of paradise, and the seats of the blessed, almost within the sound of their songs and praises. In a solitary cell, in a field remote from cities and men, or in a grove, such as *Abraham planted,* we may *call upon the name of the Lord, the everlasting God;* Gen. xxi. 33. There we may send up our souls towards heaven in most pathetic breathings of love and joy: The heart and the tongue may rejoice together in God our Saviour, while none but the trees and the skies bear witness to the hidden pleasures of our religion, and the sweet sensations of a conscience at peace with God: The trees in all their lovely bloom and verdure, and the skies in a cloudless and serene season, are happy emblems of such a conscience, serene and blooming with life and glory. When the sun and daylight are withdrawn, we may talk over our hopes and our holy joys to the silence of the moon and the midnight stars: Silent are they, and secure witnesses of those divine delights, to which the noisy and the busy world are too much strangers, and which the public must not know. There we may make our boast aloud in the name of Jesus, as our Saviour and our beloved: We may reckon up before him who sees all things our fairest evidences of

an interest in his love, and may glory in the hope of his salvation: Surely, when all the pleasing passions of nature are excited into such a just and lively exercise on divine objects, the power and the pleasure of religion within us will acquire thereby a lasting strength.

" In order to carry on this happy work, I am directed to converse much with those parts of christianity, which are suited to raise the most sprightly affections. I have done it, O Lord, and yet I feel my heart too little warmed and raised! But I would repeat the holy work; it is all duty, and it should be all delight: I would repeat it, till I find the sacred fire kindle and glow within. I would run over again that vast and extensive field of wonders. Again, let me survey the sublime glories of thy majesty, thy power, thy wisdom, thy goodness, all unsearchable and all infinite. I would dwell upon them till I am lost in this boundless ocean of godhead, and swallowed up in adoration and wonder. Then would I recal my past days of life, and bring past years back to my remembrance. With a sacred solemnity would I revolve in my heart the multitude of my transgressions, and the multitude of divine mercies, till my soul be melted into repentance and love: There is an unknown pleasure in the tears of pious love and holy mourning. I would read the astonishing history of the love of Christ, and trace the divine path of it down from his Father's bosom to his state of infancy, to the manger, and the stable at Bethlehem: I would follow this golden track of love through the weaknesses, the fatigues, and sorrows of a life of poverty and reproach: I would trace it on the midnight mountains of prayer, and through the solitary wilderness, the stage of his sore temptations: I follow the shining thread of this unwearied love, till it brought him to sustain unknown agonies in the garden, and nailed him to the cursed tree: I behold him there groaning and expiring under the weight of my sins: Amazing spectacle! What will awaken devout passion, if such varied scenes of divine love and divine sorrow cannot do it?

" Let me borrow those blessed patterns of warm and living devotion, which David has left us, and tune the songs of Zion to the name of Jesus: The sweetest songs, and the sweetest name will happily unite and increase the divine harmony. Oh! when shall I feel the ardent desires, the penitent sorrows, the holy wishes, and pious elevated joys of the ancient Psalmist? Oh! for the return of the same Spirit that gave the soul and the harp of David, these sacred and immortal elevations. When I find a divine influence reaching my heart, and raising a devout passion there, I would hold fast and cherish the heavenly sunbeam, till I feel the holy warmth diffused through all my powers: Nor would I willingly suffer the tides of business or care in this world to quench the spark which was kindled from above. I would keep up the savour of divine things among the common affairs of this life. A present God in the midst of the labours of this world, will sweeten and sanctify them all, and bring heaven down to earth.

" Suffer me not, O my God, to bury all my religion within me. Let my tongue communicate some of the wonders of thy mercy, and be the lively instrument of thy praise: Give courage and wisdom, that I may know when and how to divert vain discourse, and may dare to speak for God. Oh! when shall the time be, that *they which fear the Lord, shall speak often one to another;* Mal. iii. 16. and warm each other's hearts with heavenly conversation? When shall the blessed Spirit revisit the forsaken churches, and dwell again in the degenerate families of christians? While we feel our hearts heavy, and our affections cold and languid in the things of God, we toil and heave in vain without this Spirit. We flutter upon the ground, and make attempts to rise heavenward: but,

alas! we grovel and groan under our impotence, till the Spirit gives us an eagle's wing to mount us up toward the heavenly world. With all our pious endeavours, let us join our efforts of importunate request for the return of the quickening Spirit, and his vital influences. Oh! that I might live much in the faith of unseen things, and set myself continually as on the borders of death. Turn aside the veil, O blessed Jesus, that I may look into the unseen world! Or give the eyes of my faith vigour enough to pierce through the veil, and see my God and my Saviour. And may this blessed sight make a divine impression upon all the powers of my nature, such as may awaken every vigorous and pleasing passion of the heart, such as may engage me to keep my hopes always awake, my evidences for heaven unspotted, and my desires ever breathing toward thy presence, my Saviour, and my God! If my pious passions were in their warmest exercise, I should be ever ready to obey the divine order for my removal hence: I should receive the messenger death with a smile on my countenance, and follow the angel with a cheerful step, while he leads me away from a world of sin, sorrow, and darkness, to the regions of life and joy.

"O happy country, where sorrow and sin have no place, where my spirit in its inmost powers shall feel an eternal spring! While we dwell in this world, it is all winter with us: We behold the sun as afar off, and receive but feeble influences. But in the world on high, all things around us are full of life and love: There are no gloomy hours, no chilling blasts, no cold and cloudy seasons. There no damp shall hang upon the wing of my devout affections, no waters shall ever quench the fervour of them. There I shall be for ever ascending nearer to God the centre of my soul, and all my motions will be swifter too. Every power within me shall feel stronger influences of his love, when I am got so far within the divine attraction. Then I shall complain no longer of absence and distance, nor feel any more eclipse of the face of my God; but I shall be perpetually receiving a full efflux of light and love from the eternal Sun of grace and glory. I shall spend the ages of my endless existence in a rich variety of sublime duties, and sublime delights; such delights and such duties as are, and must be unknown, till we put off these coarse and cumberous garments of flesh and blood, these veils that enwrap our souls in darkness. Happy shall I be indeed, when all the troublesome and disquieting influences of flesh and blood shall cease: All my painful and uneasy passions shall be for ever banished: Grief, and fear, and anger, shall vex my spirit no more. Animal nature must be buried in the dust, and all the ferments and emotions of it shall cease for ever.

"But must I then lose all those kindly ferments of nature too, all those pleasing emotions, which in this present state add fresh vigour and delight to the soul in the exercise of its best affections, love and joy? If all these must be lost, who can inform me what shall come in the room of them? Surely love and joy are immortal things; they were made for heaven, and cannot die, nor shall their vigour be diminished in a world that was built for happiness. What strange unknown powers then shall be given to separate spirits, whereby these divine affections shall be invigorated, and raised to nobler degrees of exercise? Or shall my separate spirit, when it is divested of every clog, and exulting in complete liberty, use all its own affectionate powers in a nobler and more perfect manner, when I shall see the divine objects of them face to face? Surely the holy souls that are dismissed from flesh, shall be richly furnished with all necessary faculties for their own felicity. Every saint in glory shall find full satisfaction, and intense delight, when all its best affections are united and employed on the most lovely and desirable objects;

when they are all fixed on God, their supreme good, and on Jesus, the most perfect, and most divine image of the Father.

" Jesus, together with the Father, shall be the object of our contemplation and love. And at the same time his holy soul, with all its pure affections, rejoicing in its own nearness to God, shall be the pattern of our heavenly joy. *I in them*, says our blessed Lord, *I in them, and thou in me, that they all may be made perfect in one;* John xvii. 23. And we are told,—*We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is;* 1 John iii. 2.

" These are the sweet notices of our future felicity, that he has given us to cheer our hearts in the present state of faith and labour: These are the bright, but distant glimpses of those entertainments, which are prepared for us in our Father's house. These are little prospects of those *rivers of pleasure*, that run between the hills of paradise, and *make glad* the new Jerusalem, *the city of our God:* Such joys as these await us on high. Do we not feel our hearts pant and point upward? These are the joys of divine love; the very faith and hope of this blessedness, the slight glimpses and foretastes of it here on earth, have something in them unspeakable and full of glory: But the complete relish and fruition of it is reserved for heaven, and for heavenly inhabitants to know and enjoy. There, and there only, are such immediate and rich profusions of divine love, as the heart of man in this mortal state, is neither pure enough to partake of, nor large enough to conceive. We must die, we must die out of this world, to learn perfectly what those pleasures are; nor can we know them but by enjoyment. Missionary angels could not make us understand them, nor a visit from departed saints. Earthly languages were not made to express the fulness of these celestial sensations: The ideas of paradise demand *unutterable words;* nor are spirits dwelling in flesh either fit or able to hear them. We must die then, to learn how these blessed ones love God, and how God loves the blessed. Oh! when will the happy day arrive? When will the hour shine out upon us, and the bright moment appear? It is coming, it is coming, as fast as time can roll away, and the sun and moon can finish their appointed periods.

" Come, my soul, rouse thyself from thy dull and lethargic temper; shake off the dust of this earth, that hangs heavy upon thy better powers. Hast thou not been long weary of such cold and frozen devotion, as is practised in this earthly state? Hast thou not long complained of loving thy God so little, and of tasting so little of his love? Come, raise thyself above these dull and despicable scenes of flesh and sense, above all that is not immortal. Lift up thy head with cheerfulness and eager hope; look out with longing eyes, beyond the shadowy region of death, and salute the dawning of thy eternal day: Stretch out thy arms of intense desire, and send a flight of devout wishes across the dark valley, to meet the approaching joys of immortality."

AN ESSAY

TOWARDS

THE ENCOURAGEMENT

OF

CHARITY SCHOOLS,

PARTICULARLY THOSE

WHICH ARE SUPPORTED BY PROTESTANT DISSENTERS,

FOR

TEACHING THE CHILDREN OF THE POOR TO READ AND WORK.

THE PREFACE.

To the generous Supporters of the Schools of Charity among the Protestant Dissenters, and particularly to the Managers of those Schools.

GENTLEMEN,

MY heart is with you in your pious and compassionate designs: Go on and prosper in your charitable cares and labours for the education of poor and unhappy children: Poor and unhappy children indeed, who have either lost their parents by death, or whose parents are not able to give them, or provide for them any tolerable instruction in the things of God or man. It is from occasional converse with some of you, that I have been better enabled to compose several parts of this defence of the schools of charity. It is also by some of your number that I have been informed what mistakes may be committed in the conduct of these affairs, and what methods may be most successful to attain your most desirable ends, that is, to keep the poor from being a nuisance, to render them some way useful to the world, and to put their feet into the path that leads to their own happiness here and hereafter. Give me leave therefore to set before you in one view, several of those things which seem necessary to support this cause of liberality, and which I have learned in some measure from yourselves.

I. Let your great aims and designs in all your zeal and diligence in this matter be very sincere for the public good. Set your intentions right for the glory of God, for the increase of true religion in the world, for the benefit of poor destitute children in soul and body, for the training them up to become blessings to the nation, for the support and honour of the present government, and for the security and defence of the protestant succession.

II. See to it that in every step you take, you keep as many of these things as possible constantly in your eye, whether you seek masters or mistresses for the instruction of children, whether you prescribe orders and rules for their behaviour, whether you appoint seasons for their examination, or whether you enquire after families in which they may be placed when they go out of your schools; and let no private ends or designs bias your thoughts and conduct in any of these affairs: Let it appear with bright evidence to the world, that the honour of God, and the good of the public, are your only motives in this work.

III. Take good care of the character of the masters and mistresses whom you choose for the instruction of the children. See that they be sufficiently skilled in the things which they pretend to teach: Admit none but those who are sober and religious in their personal behaviour, diligent and careful in all the parts of their proper duty, tender and compassionate to the children of the poor, prudent to deal with them according to their

temper, age and capacity, solicitous for the welfare and improvement of their scholars, and faithful to the trust which you repose in them. Let them not be persons of a hasty spirit, nor of an angry and rash temper: There have been some masters, I will not say in your schools, so brutal and incompassionate, that because the children are poor, they are used with excess of rigour and severity in the treatment of them: Nor should the teachers be so familiar and easy, as to let their scholars trifle with them, or neglect their duty, or be guilty of criminal practices without due reproof or correction. They should not be persons of sloth or indolence, that have no concern whether the children improve or no, so they do but receive their salary: Nor should they be persons that are guilty of any degrees of intemperance, or violence, nor ill language, nor unbecoming speech or carriage, but such as may give an example of piety and virtue, charity and goodness, at the same time as they teach the rules of it.

As I would presume that no persons of any of these culpable characters are entrusted with the education of children among you, so I am persuaded I need give no caution against the admission of persons into this trust who are disaffected to the present government: For the very name and profession of a protestant dissenter is utterly inconsistent with all the principles of those who have their eye to a popish pretender. These things are not only to be considered at first, when you admit masters or mistresses into your schools, but you must carefully enquire whether they continue this prudent and pious behaviour, and act agreeably to their station and business, and are conformable to your appointment and direction. Remember that if teachers and governors behave ill, there is huge injury done to children thereby. It is a waste of their time of life which is proper for learning, it is a deceiving of their parents, and a great disappointment to them, it is a cheat upon yourselves, and a loss both of your money and your care.

IV. Be not contented merely to have them read the Bible, and be taught the catechism at proper seasons, but let the truths and duties of it be explained to them in a familiar and easy way, by taking the answers to pieces, and instructing the children till they understand the sense of them. It would also be a very useful thing for the children to have a particular collection of scriptures, which might impress upon their tender minds not only the duties of piety towards God, but also the duties of sobriety and temperance, of justice and truth, of humility and submission to superiors, of diligence and industry in their business, of kindness and love to all men, and especially to persons of piety and virtue, whatsoever sects or parties of christians they belong to. I am informed such a manual is partly composed, and will be published in a little time.

They should be put in mind frequently of the excellency of the christian religion, in distinction from that of Turks, and Jews, and heathens; and of the excellency of the protestant religion, in opposition to the papists, with all their idolatry and superstition, their cruel and wicked principles, their mischievous and bloody practices. They should be informed also, on every occasion, of the great and invaluable privileges of being born in Great Britain, and of living under so excellent a government as ours is, wherein there is liberty of conscience to serve God according to our own understandings, and wherein people are not punished and persecuted merely for their principles of religion. And on

this account they should be taught to honour our most excellent King George, our most gracious Queen Caroline, and all the Royal Family, and be ready to defend the protestant succession in this illustrious House with their tongues, and their hands, and with all their powers. It may be useful also, to put other little books into their hands, to assist the devotion of their younger years, and to encourage and confirm them in the principles and practices of all moral and divine virtues. Some of these may be written in verse as well as in prose, which will allure children to read them, and assist their memories in getting them by heart: They should all have lessons appointed in their books, and they should be required to repeat them to their teachers, at stated hours or seasons, once or twice in a week.

V. As the children are not constantly under their master's eye and care, but spend much of their time with their parents, so there should be some care taken to charge their parents to make them read at home, at least once or twice a day, and to keep them by due discipline to a regular behaviour, that they may not be guilty of profaneness or immorality, obstinacy, disobedience to superiors, or any wickedness at home or abroad.

VI. Let not the Lord's-day be spent by them at random, nor let them wander after their own wills where they please; but let them be obliged to attend at some place of public worship, either with their masters or mistresses, that they may be under their eye and observation; or with their parents, who should be charged and engaged to take particular care of their religious observation of the Lord's-day. And wheresoever children go to worship on the Lord's-day, whether it be with their parents or with their teachers, let it be a constant part of the business on the Monday mornings, for their teachers to enquire what they remember of the sermons they have heard, at least, so far as to make them repeat the text by heart on which the minister preached.

VII. Let there be certain seasons of examination appointed two or three times a year, not only to enquire into the state of the school in general, or to fill up vacancies as the children are dismissed, but to make a particular enquiry how the children improve in their learning; and if there be any defect, to find out whether it be the fault of the scholars or of the teachers: If the child's incapacity or low natural parts be the occasion of it, let him be excited and encouraged to double diligence: If the child has been negligent, reproofs and threatenings should be added: But if it be found that the non-improvement of children be owing to the neglect or the mismanagement of the teachers, let there be due cognizance taken of it in a proper way, and new teachers be chosen, if two or three admonitions obtain no success.

VIII. It would be a great and unspeakable advantage to these schools of charity, if you could contrive some methods whereby all the children of the poor might be employed in some useful labours one part of the day, that those who are to earn their bread by the labour of their hands, might be engaged in work for this purpose, even from the younger years of life. This would fix them betimes in such a manner of life, as the providence of God has suited to their circumstances in the world. This would have a manifest tendency to secure them from pride and sloth, and would be the most effectual answer

to a very common and powerful objection, in the lips of many persons against charity schools.

IX. For this reason, I would propose, that if the parents can and will employ their children one part of the day in useful labours toward their subsistence, this should rather be encouraged than forbidden; always provided that there be such due care taken daily by the parents, that it may be no excuse for idle children to absent themselves from the school and play truant, to the disappointment both of their parents, their teachers, and their benefactors.

X. When children have continued a proper time under the instructions of the school, and you find they have so much knowledge as may lay some foundation for religion and virtue, and as may render them useful in some of the lower stations of life, endeavour then that they may be placed out, and fixed either in country labours, in domestic services, in some inferior post in a shop, or in mechanic trades, that so they may not run loose and wild in the world, and forget all that you have taught them, and lie exposed to temptation and misery. If this cannot be done immediately, take some care that their parents or friends employ them in proper business at home, and keep them to reading, and writing, to knitting, sewing, or domestic work, that all your labours and expences may not be lost.

XI. Whensoever these children are to be placed out in families, see to it that these families have a due character for sobriety and diligence: Engage their masters or mistresses to take some care that these servants read their Bible daily, and that they make use of any other part of their learning, as their post of service or employment will admit, that, if possible, the benefits which you have bestowed on them may be lasting.

XII. For this purpose, enquire now and then into their behaviour in those places where you have fixed them: And if it appear they have behaved well, give them some token of your favour; ten, or twenty, or thirty shillings the first year or two after they are gone from the school, This will greatly encourage them to pursue the practice of piety and virtue. I know some of you do more than this. I wish it were the universal custom of all the schools.

In the last place, as I hope you pray for divine success in every good work in which you are engaged, so let your prayers accompany this your labour of love, for the temporal and eternal welfare of the poor children, who taste of your bounty. May the God of light and grace succeed all your designs to train up those young destitute creatures to be a blessing to the world, and that your schools may be nurseries for the church of Christ: And may your liberality and your pious cares meet with a rich reward from heaven in the abundant blessings of this life, and that which is to come. *Amen.*

1728.

AN ESSAY

TOWARDS THE

ENCOURAGEMENT OF CHARITY SCHOOLS,

PARTICULARLY AMONG PROTESTANT DISSENTERS.

THE good education of children is an important duty of parents, and a very valuable blessing to the rising age; yet there are great multitudes of parents, in the lower rank of life, who are so ignorant, that they are incapable of instructing their own children well in the knowledge of things, that belong to this world or another: Or, if they have knowledge, yet some are so exceeding poor, that they can hardly withhold time enough from earning their bread, to spend in the careful education of their sons and their daughters: And among these poorer parts of mankind, there are others, who are too careless in this important concern, though the welfare of their children, here and hereafter, seems to depend upon it: And there are great numbers also who die in poverty, and leave their young offspring behind them untaught, and grievously exposed.

What must be done in this case? Must all those children, who are so unhappy as to be born of poor or ignorant parents, grow up like the brutes of the earth, without education? Must they be abandoned to the wilderness of their own nature, and be let run loose and savage in the streets? Shall no care be taken to inform their minds, to curb their sinful passions, and to make them speak and act like reasonable creatures, and live useful to the world? When we see or hear of such unhappy objects as these, methinks our compassion and charity for these young creatures of our own species, should work powerfully within us, to reach out the hand of bounty, to train them up to some degrees of knowledge, and to the practice of virtue, and put them in a way to support themselves by honest labour: Or, at least our zeal for the honour of God, for the good of our country, and for the welfare of the succeeding age, should inspire us with some sentiments of liberality, in order to redress this grievance, and prevent the growing mischief.

Those that are blessed with a good competence of the things of this life, and have no children of their own, seem to be invited by Providence to take these opportunities of doing good to the miserable and distressed orphans who have lost their parents, and the children of the poor and needy, who cannot maintain and instruct their own offspring. Those also who feel the tender sensations of parental love to their sons and their daughters, and, with zeal and delight, train them up in useful knowledge, should sympathize a little with those poor unhappy parents, who would fain have their children trained up in piety and virtue, in diligence, and duty to God and man; but their mere poverty withholds them from giving their children the benefit of a school. Thus different persons should be led by various motives, to promote so pious and charitable a work.

These were the springs which at first moved the hearts of some pious and generous persons to erect schools of charity for this purpose, and particularly in the city of London. There was one set up in Gravel Lane, in Southwark, by the protestant dissenters

a little before the revolution, and our deliverance by King William of glorious memory. Many others were formed by persons of the established church, to which several dissenters subscribed largely. But at last they found, by sufficient experience, that the children were brought up in too many of these schools in principles of disaffection to the present government, in a bigoted zeal for the word church, and with a violent enmity, and malicious spirit of persecution, against all whom they were taught to call presbyterians, though from many of their hands they received their bread and clothing.

It was time then, for the dissenters to withdraw that charity which was so abused: And since the favour of our rulers gives us leave to educate children according to our sentiments, and the dictates of our consciences, some generous spirits among us have made attempts of this kind, and employ their bounty in the support of a few such schools. And as we hope this charity will be acceptable to God, and useful to mankind, so we are well assured, it will be a sensible service to the present government, which has no friends in the world more sincere, and more zealous than the protestant dissenters. Several excellent sermons have been preached among us, wherein persons have been warmly excited to contribute their helping hand to this charitable and beneficial design. That which was published in the year 1723, by my worthy friend and brother Mr. Daniel Neal, gives the most large and particular narrative of the management of these schools, and their methods of education, with an account of the advantages arising to the public thereby: And to this useful discourse I refer my readers, who would be particularly informed in this matter. When I was desired to preach on the like occasion last November, after a short account of the benefit of good education, I undertook to vindicate these schools from many common and popular objections which are raised against them: And I have here published this vindication a little enlarged, and descended into some more particular circumstances, at the earnest request of several gentlemen, who are concerned in the support and management of one of them, *viz.* that which is kept in Crutched Friars near Aldgate.*

I designed, indeed, to have prefaced this discourse with a short Treatise on Education; but that work growing larger daily under my hands, and being much importuned to let this appear sooner in the world, I have at last consented to it. Before I apply myself directly to answer the objections, I ask leave to lay down several propositions by way of concession: And when those who raise complaints against our schools of charity, have seen how much I grant to them, this may perhaps have some good influence to mollify their spirits, and abate their opposition to these schools, and may prepare them to give a more favourable attention to the answers which shall follow:

Proposition I. The great God has wisely ordained, in the course of his providence in all ages, that among mankind there should be some rich and some poor: And the same providence hath allotted to the poor the meaner services, and hath given to the rich the superior and more honourable businesses of life: Nor is it possible, according to the present course of nature and human affairs, to alter this constitution of things, nor is it our design to attempt any thing so unreasonable.

* Since that time, the Rev. Mr. Samuel Chandler has published his sermon, which was preached January 1, 1728, wherein he defends these schools of charity against the cavils which have been raised, and the censures cast upon them, by the author of the "Fable of the Bees." Upon the perusal of it, I find very solid and effectual answers given to the objections of that author. His discourse has touched upon several points which I had omitted, and has given considerable assistance toward the support of this cause of charity and beneficence.

Proposition II. As the children of the rich in general ought to enjoy such an education, as may fit them for the better businesses of life, so the children of the poor, especially such as need the charity of their neighbours, should not be generally educated in such a manner, as may raise them above the services of a lower station.

Proposition III. Yet surely there may be some exception made for the children of those poor parents, who have enjoyed plentiful circumstances in life, and have behaved well in them, and performed the duties of justice and charity; but by the wise providence of God have been reduced to great degrees of poverty, and are hardly able to provide food and clothing for their own offspring, and much less to bestow a good education upon them. Some of these children are yet sunk deeper into distress, and are become orphans. Such misery has somewhat of a sacred tenderness belonging to it, and seems to claim the regards of sympathy and compassion from those who now enjoy plentiful circumstances, while they meditate on the uncertainty of human affairs, and remember that they are liable to the like calamity. And it is my opinion, that amongst all the poor, these children ought to have the chief advantage of the schools of charity.

Proposition IV. It seems also not unreasonable, that some distinction may be made between the children of the poor in great towns or cities, and those who are born and bred in far distant villages. The poor who are born and bred in towns and cities, see and know more of the advantages of mankind, and the brighter side of the world, and come into more acquaintance with the better parts and offices of life, and by this means are, as it were, naturally something nearer to them, and are sometimes occasionally called to assist in them: Whereas those who are born and bred afar off in country villages, see and know little or nothing of this, and therefore, as they have less aptitude for these things, and have less need of them, so they have no tendency or reach of soul after them; for Providence seldom throws these objects or opportunities in their way.

Proposition V. If therefore the poor who are bred in towns and cities, should enjoy some small advantages in their education, beyond those who are born in far distant fields and villages, if they should be taught to add and subtract a few figures, as well as to write a plain hand, it is but agreeable to, and correspondent with, that Providence which has determined the place of their birth, and *fixed the bounds of their habitation;* Acts xvii. 26. But for the poorest of mankind in distant parts of the country, perhaps the art of reading may be sufficient to answer most of their necessities: And if they are taught to read well, I will not urge the charity of my friends to bestow any higher degrees of learning upon them, on supposition that they are to be engaged in the business of husbandry and day-labour.

Proposition VI. And if it were possible, I would have every charity school so constituted, that the children of the poor, both in city and country, might be employed in some work and labour, generally one half of the day; that it might have partly the nature of a workhouse, as well as of a school, for all those who are to live by their hard labour, rather than by their learning. I mention several of these things but very briefly here, because I shall have occasion to resume these subjects in the following parts of my discourse. I proceed now to give some answers to the common objections against all our charity schools for the instruction of the poor.

Objection I. There is no need of any learning at all for the meanest ranks of mankind: Their business is to labour, not to think: Their duty is to do what they are commanded, to fill up the most servile posts, and to perform the lowest offices and drudgeries

of life, for the conveniency of their superiors, and common nature gives them knowledge enough for this purpose. They are born in the lowest station, and they ought always to be kept in ignorance, that so knowing nothing but what they are bid, they may do their work without reasoning about it.

Answer 1. Shall I argue a little against this objection, upon the mere principle of compassion and pity? If we consider how many thousands of the poor, both men and women in this nation, are stupidly ignorant of every thing that belongs to religion and morality, and know nothing of the true life of a reasonable creature, who are almost perfect heathens in a christian country, surely it must raise some compassion in our hearts towards them; have we any tenderness about our souls, and yet refuse to do any thing to prevent the young rising generation from being immersed in the same stupid ignorance and gross errors about the things of God and man? Or, can we be content to see multitudes of mankind growing up wild and thoughtless of their best interests, and perishing by thousands, from one generation to another, for want of light and knowledge?

2. Give me leave yet farther, to talk with such objectors upon the foot of that golden rule, which our Saviour gave to all his disciples; *Matt.* vii. 12. Is this dealing with others, as you would have others deal with you? Is this advice concerning the poor, such as you yourselves would think reasonable and agreeable to the rules of christian charity and goodness, if you had been born in the midst of extreme poverty and ignorance, and had several wealthy neighbours near you, who could relieve your misery at so easy a rate? Turn the tables a little, and set yourselves for a moment in the place of the poorest creature, and then enquire, whether you would think it a kind and equitable conduct in your wealthy neighbours, who call themselves christians, to bind you for ever down to a state of darkness, and discourage the charity of others, who would give you a lift from the deeps of ignorance? And must every soul of mankind, who is born in poverty, be confined to live without knowledge? Suppose one in twenty should give some very promising prospect of an uncommon ingenuity and sense, must he be confined with his fellows to the same darkness and drudgery for ever? Let it be considered, that the God of nature has distributed genius, capacity, and sprightliness of mind, with a promiscuous hand among the rich and the poor. The same God *is the Maker of them both;* Prov. xxii. 2. and he has not always made the richest to be the brightest of men. There may be here and there a fine and sparkling genius born in cottages; there may be some bright souls amongst the poorest of mortals: These may, perhaps, by good cultivation, grow up into honourable and useful members in the church or state: We have had surprising instances of this kind in our day. And why should not such sprightly children, if I may so express it, have their chance to rise in the world? And be put into a capacity of exerting their powers for the service of God and man? Why should the world be deprived of all the benefit that might be drawn from such ingenious minds, under the care of a happy education? Let them at least be taught to know their letters, and have a way made for their brighter talents to discover themselves. Diamonds of a noble lustre are taken from common earth, and every diamond is rough or cloudy, till it is cut and polished. If there should happen to be a vein of silver mixed with the leaden ore, why should it be denied the favour of the refining pot, since nature seems to have made it on purpose to shine and glitter?

3. A confinement of all the poor to such shameful degrees of profound ignorance, is the ready way to bring in confusion and slavery upon a whole nation. When the com-

mon people have no knowledge of any thing, they are the fittest tools for ambition and tyranny, for treason and public mischief. Men of crafty and aspiring minds know how to make use of persons bred up in such gross ignorance, to carry on their own seditious purposes, and raise dangerous tumults in a peaceful state. Or if subtle and imperious men should ever obtain power among us, these poor, thoughtless creatures are soon turned into fatal instruments to enslave a rich and free people. Or finally, if a rude and untaught multitude set up for themselves, and rise into tumult, or rebellion against our present sovereign King George, contrary to all right and justice, it would be found very hard to suppress them: They would never be convinced of their present folly, or of their true interest, because they were never taught to practise reasoning, nor to understand common sense. A silly noisy word, or a foolish rhyme tossed about through such a brutal multitude, has raised and fired a whole country into sedition and treason: Our British annals are the frequent witnesses of this madness, in those ancient days when our forefathers could neither read nor write. Let it be remembered, that knowledge is the truest spring of liberty among mankind. Had many of the foreign nations in Europe, Asia, or Africa, ever enjoyed such means of knowledge as Great Britain enjoys, they had never been immersed in such deeps of bondage and slavery. It is knowledge that preserves and secures a sense of true freedom in the minds of men. Samson was not put to grind in the mill till he had lost his eyes. And if we are agreed to prevent light from striking into the souls of the multitude, it is possible that, in some few generations, it may come to our turn to grind in the mill too.

4. Such stupid ignorance will fit and prepare the minds of the poor for all the superstitions and iniquities of the popish church. Ignorance is the true and fruitful mother of such devotion. When persons are not taught the better principles of religion, they will become ready believers of all the lying tales and miracles of the Romish clergy: They will quickly be induced to practise all their gay and senseless superstitions, though they are never so contrary to reason and scripture, when they are not capable of saying any thing against them. They will be led blindly by the priests into any absurdities of faith, or any criminal practices which they please to consecrate by the name of religion. Besides, if there be no care of the instruction of the minds of the poor among us, whatsoever forms of worship, or of political service they happen to fall into, it is, as it were, by chance and without knowledge: It is all a mere matter of stupid mechanism: Whether they are in the church or the street, in a fleet or an army, it is like a crowd of bodies without souls. And can such a set of creatures, when they are grown up to the age of men, and know nothing, can they be either acceptable to God in their pretences to religion, or can they be useful to Great Britain in its best interests? But this thought leads me to the next particular.

5. If young persons have no manner of education, they will not so much as know the God that made them, nor what is their duty towards their Maker. What lamentable profaneness, what irreligion, what horrid blasphemy, what swearing and cursing, and all manner of impiety would abound amongst us, if the poorer part of mankind were never taught to read, nor instructed in the things of God? And indeed, the instruction which this sort of objectors would allow them, is so very small, by permitting them to go to church once a week, that they would gain very little knowledge of God and Christ, and our holy religion thereby, if they were deprived of all other advantages of knowledge.

I have sometimes conversed with some of those miserable creatures, and I have found them ignorant to a most amazing degree of the first principles of religion and the gospel.

Has Great Britain been blessed of God with many rich conveniences, for the improvement of the mind, by writing or printing books of every useful kind; and shall these blessings be made useless to so great a part of our nation? This would be to practise much as the papists do, who rob the common people of the Bible, the book of life, and permit none to enjoy it, but in the Latin tongue. It is a fountain of heavenly grace, but it is a sealed one to the poor, that are educated in popish countries. And is it not a shame in this protestant nation, that the scripture should be a fountain sealed to any of her children? When the Bible is translated into our mother tongue, is it not a lamentable thought and almost a scandal, that there should be any amongst us to whom it should be a useless book, because they have never learned to read? And those that are unwilling that their fellow-creatures should attain the knowledge of reading, it is as if they sealed up the book of life. If I am not learned enough to read, it is all one to me, as though the book were for ever shut; *Isaiâh* xxix. 11. What an envious creature is he who would obstruct the free entrance of the common light of the heavens to mortals who are born in darkness, or would forbid sight to be given to the blind? What a provoking crime is this against the God of nature? And is it not as heinous and provoking a sin against the God of grace, that when he has opened the book of life amongst us, there should be any persons who should forbid us to be taught to read it, because we happen to be poor? Would it not be a most flagrant and complicated instance of ill-nature, pride, and scorn, if we should hear a rich man say concerning his poor neighbours, *Because they are born in extreme poverty, let them live and die in darkness.*

6. If we lay the case of religion aside, and those important duties which all men owe to God, yet how ignorant will the poor be of the various duties which they owe to their fellow-creatures, if they have no manner of learning bestowed upon them? How little sense will they have of justice, of truth, of honesty and faithfulness? How little sense will servants have of the honour and obedience that is due to their own masters? How little will they know of that equity and righteous dealing which should be practised between man and man? What happy seeds of equity and truth, of labour, diligence, and temperance are sown in the hearts of children by a wise and careful education in their younger years? But how many young creatures have been easily allured to theft and robbery, to lying and deceit, and all manner of iniquity and mischief, for want of a virtuous education? Their honest neighbours have been deprived of their just property by pilfering and plunder, and the criminals themselves have run headlong to the destruction of body and soul. Tell me, you that forbid children the knowledge of letters, and would not suffer them to learn the art of reading, tell me, whether you can suppose they can ever become the worse labourers, worse servants, worse ploughmen or soldiers, by reading in the word of God what duties they owe to men? Are not all the principles and rules of virtue and goodness, of diligence and sobriety, of obedience to superiors, of justice to their neighbours, of truth, faithfulness, and love to all men contained in his holy book? And when the poor young creatures shall find all these things commanded and required by the great God that made them, when they shall read many happy examples of these duties, and the vengeance of God against transgressors, will all this have no influence upon their hearts, to lead them to practise these virtues? Are there not many other little books drawn out of the holy scriptures, wherein these virtues of the civil life are reduced

to a shorter form, and set in a plain and easy view for those who have but little time to read? And if children have these manuals put into their hands, is it not the most likely way to train them up in all the good qualities of the social life, and to guard against those vile and pernicious practices, against that sloth, that falsehood and lying, that thievery and drunkenness, rage and malice, which abound among the ignorant rabble of mankind, who never enjoyed the blessing of education, nor the benefit of a school, where their manners might be formed to virtue and goodness?

7. Let it be considered in the last place, how wretchedly the poor will spend all their leisure time, when they are released at certain seasons from the drudgery of life, if they are never taught to read. How do they stand prepared for every temptation, and for all manner of mischief, when they know not how to improve a few leisure moments? Human nature, rude and untaught, is the more prone to wickedness. At best, we can only suppose them to sit, whole families together, in the long winter evenings, and talk scandal of their neighbours, because their minds were never furnished with better subjects of conversation. They are tempted to fill up their empty hours of life with trifles or follies, or with wicked stories, because they were never taught to know letters. How much happier would it be for the poor, if their seasons of leisure could be employed in reading the holy scriptures, for their improvement in acquaintance with God, or in conversing with any useful books, that might furnish their minds with solid and profitable knowledge? This would refine their souls, and render them every way more useful in their stations as fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, or servants. I have known such a poor family, where neither the grandmother, mother, father, nor any child could read: And I have often pitied them in my heart, to think how impertinently or sinfully their long evening hours must be spent after the work of the day is done: And they have gladly embraced the privilege of having their children taught to read in one of our schools of charity, under a sense of their own great unhappiness for want of this benefit in their younger years.

Objection II. But some will say, if the poor have any manner of learning bestowed upon them, they grow proud and haughty; they think they are immediately fit for better business, and they will not be content to do servile work, and especially the lowest offices, and the most laborious drudgery either of the house or the field: There is great want of ploughmen and labourers in the country, and poor boys will never submit to this, if they once get acquaintance with books and knowledge.

Answer 1. I would ask leave here, if it were lawful to enquire, whether some of these very masters, who make this objection, would not keep the poor in profound ignorance, that they might turn their servants into perfect slaves? But when some of the poorer sort of people have gained a little knowledge, perhaps, it has been found that, here and there, a morose rich man, or a covetous and surly farmer, cannot make such mere slaves of them, as if they were asses or oxen? Permit me only to propose a query, whether this may not be some ground of the complaint? Are there not some persons, that would subdue their fellow-creatures, of their own species, into a perfect brutal servitude, and make them as much their tools and instruments of labour as their cattle are, and treat them as though they had no souls, as though they had no share in human nature, as though they were not formed of the same flesh and blood, and had not the same sort of immortal spirits as themselves. Now if the poor know nothing at all, but are bred up

in gross ignorance, and constant stupidity, it is supposed they are fitter to become beasts of burden all their lives, without ever thinking that they are men. If this be the case, I pity the slaves indeed; but woe to their lords and masters, who keep them all their lives in such profound ignorance, upon such wretched and inhuman motives. There is a day coming, when the rich and the poor shall appear without distinction before that God, who is no *accepter of persons;* Acts x. 34.

2. Do some persons complain, that the plough stands still or drags heavily for want of hands? But does the plough stand still no where but where there is a school of charity? Alas! it is not such a slender education, as we can give to a few poor children in the city or the country, that hinders this work. We would not pretend to breed them too high for that station in life, for which their birth has designed them, nor to raise them above the labours in the country villages, where any of our schools are kept. And these villages also are exceeding few where we have schools. If there are any public schools of charity in such villages, which breed up the children of the poor to such degrees and refinements in learning, whereby the tillage of the fields is prevented for want of hands, we disclaim all such sort of charity, and leave those who support these schools to defend them against so just an objection.

But if it may not be an offence, I would make an humble enquiry, whether there be not a far more powerful allurement that calls hands from the plough; and that is, that such a great number of persons, who had blessed their paternal seats in the country with their own residence, utterly remove their habitations and households to the city, and fix themselves near the court: May not this be a much greater occasion of draining the fields and villages of a multitude of the poor, who scarce ever return to a country life again: They are tempted and allured to follow their masters, and, as they call it, to *seek their fortunes in the town:* And some of these tempt their poor neighbours hither too: This fills the city with many hundreds, if not thousands, of the lower rank, more than the city itself produces: Then several of these shift their places of service, or leave them in hopes to find better; and by this means it comes to pass, that the very servants that are out of place in London, perhaps would sometimes be sufficient to plough up half a county or a diocese.

Far be it from me to blame all those gentlemen, who change the country seat of their ancestors for a habitation in the city: Many of them may have a just call of Providence for this change. It is not my province nor pretence to direct others in the choice of their dwellings: Yet I cannot but think, if this practice should increase and become universal among the more sober and religious part of the gentry, perhaps it may have an unhappy tendency to weaken their good influence on the adjacent country, to diminish the true strength of the nation, and endanger our civil liberties. But I recal myself from this hint. My present business is only to shew, that it is not our charity schools, but this conduct of many rich men in the country, whether it be right or wrong, that calls off such a multitude of hands from husbandry.

3. Suppose it should be granted for once, which is not always true, that none but the ignorant will be brought to perform the meanest services; yet, after all the education that is provided for children in our charity schools, there will be stupid and ignorant creatures enough for those lower offices of life: There will be many in every county, who live not within the reach of these schools; and there will be some whose parts, and study, and improvement in these schools, or in better, will never arrive above a fitness

for the meanest services. I confess I am not of the opinion of these gentlemen, that none but blockheads will follow the plough: But if I were of that mind, yet I might venture to say, the plough will never want hands, if it does not stand still till there be no blockheads. I add further, with regard to the charity schools of this great city, that those children of the poor who are born in London, are not born in a place to make ploughmen of them, even if they were left in the highest degrees of their native ignorance. They would not leave the city, nor be tempted to go down to country parishes to be employed in the bnsiness of the husbandman, though they should never have opportunity to learn their letters.

4. But you say, "They grow haughty and proud, by means of the little knowledge they attain in those schools." I would ask, are there not as many as haughty and as proud, who have no learning at all? I have seen some servants who have been blessed with a happy education, and have attained far greater degrees of knowledge both of the things of God and men, than any of the rest of the family, and yet they have been more humble, more diligent, more ready to put their hands to mean servile offices, than others who have not had a tenth part of their capacity or their improvement. I know at this time two servants in one large family, who were instructed in one of the charity schools of the protestant dissenters, and yet, according to their stations, they are as diligent, as humble, and as willing servants as any in the house. It is chiefly their temper, or their want of due instruction, rather than their learning, that renders servants either haughty or humble.

Here, perhaps, the great apostle shall be cited to countenance this objection; 1 Cor. viii. 1. *Knowledge puffeth up.* But why should not the next sentence also be added, *viz.* that *charity edifieth?* Let the charity of these gentlemen who make this objection, encourage these schools, where the pride of the poor may be abated, where the souls of these young sinners may be edified in humility and every virtue, where they may be taught their proper duty and behaviour both to God and man.

5. But I add in the last place, that if all the nation were as happy as I could wish, in the enjoyment of some degrees of good education, and if all the children of the poor were taught to read, then the art of reading would be as common as that of speaking, and no one would look on himself as superior to another, because he knows his letters, and could join syllables together. Then it would follow, that no person would refuse to do the meanest services, if there were none beneath himself. For my part, I wish that there was not the meanest figure of mankind in Great Britain, whether employed in the drudgeries of a family, or holding the plough, but knew how to read his Bible, that he might be better acquainted with his duty in this world, and the way to attain happiness in the next.

Objection III. But is there not a general complaint of bad servants in our day? Are they not high and haughty, and wasteful? Do they not claim larger wages, and at the same time refuse to do the servile works that belong to their place? And what can this be imputed to more than to their education in these charity schools, wherein they are bred up to more learning and knowledge than the poor had in the days of our fathers.

Answer 1. Give me leave, in the first place, to make an humble enquiry, whether masters or mistresses are in our days so pious, so virtuous, so frugal, so regular in their conduct, and so humble as in the days of our fathers? Whether families are regulated with so much care, and whether family religion is maintained with such a holy constancy?

Whether there be such wise government and order, as in the days of those who went before us? Whether children are educated in the practice of that modesty, that humility, that diligence, as in the times of our ancestors? And if there be such a sad degeneracy found amongst the higher parts of mankind, it is no wonder if the lower ranks of human nature are corrupt, and grow degenerate too: So that you see this corruption among servants may be accounted for, without laying all the load on our schools of charity.

2. Some persons who have made their observations on human affairs, are ready to think that the luxury and finery of this age is very much increased, and that in one particular instance, which has no good influence on the temper and deportment of servants. "Do we not desire," say they, "that our servants now-a-days should make a better appearance, and shine brighter than is necessary for persons of their rank? Are there no masters who love to be waited on by servants in such apparel, as may make them think too well of themselves? Have mistresses done nothing to support that pride, haughtiness, and vanity of mind in servants, which they afterwards complain of? And it may be enquired, whether some servants have not been encouraged to think themselves too good for the lowest and meanest offices of life, when at other seasons they appear as gay, and glistering and as well dressed as their superiors, and can hardly be distinguished from them." I would only hint this way of reasoning here, not to undertake the vindication of it, but merely to be made the matter of further enquiry and consideration: For I would not have those crimes of servants charged on our charity schools, which perhaps may have their foundation in the imprudence of their superiors.

3. If it can be laid at all to the charge of any charity schools, that they have been the unhappy instruments of increasing pride among some servants, yet I am well assured, that those schools amongst protestant dissenters have done very little or none of this mischief. For amongst the vast multitudes of servants that are in Great Britain, I am persuaded that there is scarce one menial servant in two hundred, which has been bred up in the dissenting charity schools. And it is a very hard case, if these schools must bear the accusation and the guilt of those crimes in general, whereof not one in two hundred can possibly belong to them.

For my part, I could wish where there is one servant of either sex bred up in our charity schools, there were twenty educated there: I should then hope for fewer complaints of this kind in the world. And if we do not take care to train up more children of the lower rank in our schools, in order to fit them for servants, I have good reason to say that we shall scarce find servants who will comply with the religious customs of our families, and we shall see cause to repent it on more accounts than one.

I would persuade myself, that the masters and mistresses of these schools among us, teach the children of the poor which are under their care, to know what their station of life is, how mean their circumstances are, how necessary it is for them to be diligent, laborious, honest and faithful, humble and submissive, what duties they owe to the rest of mankind, and particularly to their superiors, whensoever they shall be placed in families. I am sure this ought to be a part of their instruction, and their teachers should have this charge given them, that the children should be educated in such a manner, as to know and remember, that they are bred up by charity, and to learn and practise humility upon all occasions.*

* On this occasion, I cannot but transcribe a passage of the Rev. Mr. Chandler, in his late sermon on this subject, *viz.* "Undoubtedly pride and sloth ought never to be encouraged in any, especially not in the children of the

4. If there should happen once now and then such an instance, if a child should grow vain and haughty under the advantages of the instruction which he receives from the bounty of others, if a servant thus educated, should now and then be found unwilling to perform the duties of his place, this is to be reckoned an abuse of knowledge, and not a necessary effect of it. We are not to charge any useful constitution among mankind, with those unhappy consequences which are merely the effects of that constitution abused. There is nothing so well contrived, nor so happily managed in the affairs of men, but may be perverted to vile and unhappy purposes. Surely no man would judge that the sun in the heavens should be blotted out, because it bestows daylight on the practice of a thousand iniquities. The admirable art of couching a cataract and giving sight to the blind, should not be forbidden, because a man who had enjoyed this benefit, used his eyes to commit theft, or murder, or to write treason or blasphemy. To give knowledge to those who are born in ignorance, is but like couching a cataract, it is letting in the light to a blind soul: Cursed are they that so horribly abuse this light: But they are not blessed that would withhold it from all, for fear lest some should abuse it. The inconveniences of having none of the children of the poor taught to read, would be vastly greater, and bring far heavier disadvantages on the nation, than the injury that is done by, here and there, an ill-tempered boy or girl, who have made an ill use of the knowledge they have attained, and grow vain and conceited.

Objection IV. But if the poor were permitted to learn to read their Bibles, this might be done by the labour of half an hour in the day. A very little time will serve to have their letters pointed out to them, and to teach them to spell their syllables, and put them together. There is no need of whole days instruction for such a purpose as this. They ought to employ their lives in work, and their limbs in bodily labour; they should chiefly be taught to get their own bread: And if they were thus educated, they would be made much fitter for servants and labourers.

Answer 1. Have all the children of the richer world such sharp parts and such a sprightly genius, as to learn the art of reading with so much ease, and in so little a time? Do the persons who make this objection, find all their own children so ingenious, as to improve one daily half hour so happily, and find it sufficient to acquire a good talent in reading? Why then should it be expected, that the children of the poor should learn with so little pains, and so scanty a share of instruction? Do these gentlemen suppose, that the poor are of a sharper make, and have greater penetration than the children who are born in better circumstances?

I am verily persuaded, that one half hour in a day is by no means sufficient to acquaint the younger parts of mankind with this useful science. If they had no more labour bestowed on them, they would never attain a competency of skill to make sense of what they read. I have known several persons, who, for want of being taught the art of reading well in their younger years, blunder so often, and misname their words, that

poor, who are to maintain themselves, and become useful to the public by a modest, diligent, and industrious behaviour. And in order to prevent the effects complained of, it is highly necessary, that besides their being taught the common principles of religion in the catechism, they should have some particular instructions proper to their condition continually inculcated into their minds; and be taught such little portions of holy scripture as recommend labour and industry, fidelity and honesty, modesty and humility, gratitude and submission, and the like virtues, upon which their future usefulness more especially depends. I know not whether there be any body of such instructions drawn up for the use of the charity schools. If not, I am persuaded it is a defect that ought to be supplied." This I have taken notice of in the preface, and have had some assurance given me, that such a book will be published.

they can hardly understand the plainest chapter in their Bible when they read it. And if we consider the capacities of the greatest part of mankind, I think two or three hours in a day may well be employed for this purpose, if we would ever make their skill in reading serviceable to them for the business of this life or that of another. Such a portion of time is little enough to make children become good readers, except where the genius of a child is very extraordinary, or where there are several years allotted for this learning.

2. I much approve the joining of labour and learning together in the education of the poorer parts of mankind. I think it necessary that they should be bred up to *work with their hands,* since the providence of God calls them *to gain their bread by the sweat of their brows:* And they ought not to eat *the bread of idleness.* I would never have them educated in the same manner as the sons and daughters of gentlemen, or even of the middle order of men, who can bestow upon their children something more considerable towards their support in life. I acknowledge also, that charity schools will never be set upon the best foot, and managed in the most unexceptionable manner, until some way be found to employ the children both in the city and country, that they may work as well as learn. I have been many years of this mind, and therefore I laid it down among my first propositions.

But let the persons, who would destroy our schools on account of this defect, find out some ways and means of employing the children of the poor. I am persuaded, the supporters of our schools of charity will cheerfully fall in with such proposals; and those who refuse it, should never be vindicated by me.

I know there are several managers of some of these schools, who have been earnestly desirous of engaging the children in work and labour one half of the day; they have consulted with their friends about various manufactures, or any useful labours of life; they have set their thoughts at work in good earnest, and would have been glad to have been directed to any expedient of this kind, that the children might not have spent their whole days in a school, but might have employed half the day in the labour of their hands: But in some places, both of the country and city, this project could not be brought to bear: What then? Must the poor ignorant wretches be turned out of the school and never learn to read, because their friends could not find work for them? Must they be sent to saunter in the streets and lanes all the day long, and grow wild in idleness, and be exposed to every temptation, without either work or learning? May they not be civilized and taught their letters one part of the day, even though there be no manual labour appointed for them the other?

But here is the great difficulty and hardship of our case: We are reproached for educating the children of the poor, without their confinement to labour, and the rich objectors know not how to propose any sufficient methods to effect what they desire: Even the wisdom of the nation in parliament, hath been often and in many sessions engaged in some contrivances for so valuable an end as the employment of the poor, both old and young, and something has been done towards it; but they have not yet been able to determine any thing of universal use in all places, and which is practicable throughout the nation.

In some of our schools of charity, this has been practised, and that not only in the country, but in the city too. The boys in our dissenting charity schools have been sometimes employed in digging, in weeding, in gathering stones out of the ploughed grounds;

and where the weaving manufacture hath been cultivated, all the children have done something towards it, for some hours in the day. As for the girls that are educated in these schools, they are always taught to work with their needles of both kinds, both knitting and sewing; and in some places they are obliged, as I have been told, to make the beds, to use the besom or the mop, and when grown up, to do harder work, perhaps to stand at the wash-bowl, and to perform the servile offices which belong to a family. I wish these things were more universally taught and practised, as far as possible. And wheresoever any methods of employing these children, who are bred up by charity in labour, are contrived, proposed, and rendered feasible and practicable in the city or the country, the managers of these schools will never refuse to promote it, nor should the children ever refuse to comply, under the penalty of being utterly shut out from the benefit of this liberality.

Objection V. But if we allow them to learn to read, what need is there that they should learn to write also? This puffs them up with a huge conceit of themselves and their learning, this makes them think themselves immediately fit for clerks, or some superior business: And this knowledge surely can never be pretended to be necessary in the lower ranks of life.

Answer. I will by no means contend for writing as a matter of equal necessity or advantage with that of reading. There may be some places where the bounty of the contributors to such a charitable work, may not be able to maintain a writing master, nor to keep children long enough at school: Yet even there they should be taught to read well. And there may also be some of the poor who dwell in very obscure villages, and are confined to rural labours, and others in towns or cities, and especially girls, whose business is most within doors at home, who may have but very little occasion, and as little inclination to use a pen. I would not therefore by any means have it made a necessary part of a charity school, that the children should be taught to write. Yet I beg leave to give my opinion, that there are several conveniences, that even the poorest of the people, and especially servants, may attain by learning to write, which can be no disadvantage to the public, and some of which may be for the sensible benefit of their masters and mistresses, as well as of servants themselves.

I. For the servants themselves.

1. Why may not a poor servant have the privilege of conveying his thoughts to a dear relation, to a father, a mother, a brother or a sister, and letting them know their welfare or their troubles by writing? Why should all the lower part of mankind be universally, and for ever cut off from all those mutual tendernesses which nature inspires, and which may be communicated by a paper messenger? Perhaps some of their souls may have as much humanity and softness in them as those of the rich, and they may have as sweet a relish of the endearments of kindred or friendship: They may long as much to know how it stands with their father's house, from which they are, as it were, banished by the necessities of life and their servile stations; and it is a hard case if none of these must ever be permitted to partake of this privilege, because they happen to be poor: Hard case indeed, that they must never taste of these refreshments, these sweet solaces of the heart, to relieve the drudgery and fatigues of life.

2. There are many of the poorer parts of mankind, who have not their minds so crowded and encumbered with other things, that fill their letters with serious religion,

and communicate to each other the lively sense which they have of divine things on their own hearts, and encourage each other in their progress in virtue and piety. There are several of these pious poor, who have given their friends many a supporting word in their conflict with temptations, and mutually send this sort of assistance to each other, and are encouraged hereby to go through their daily labours with cheerfulness. And why should this be utterly forbidden them? I wish all those who enjoy better circumstances improved their pens for so pious a purpose.

3. When the poorer part of the world, who are truly serious, attend upon the ministry of the gospel, they labour as well as the rich to treasure up in their minds as much of it as they are able, and take as much pains to retain it: But, alas! their memories are as feeble and treacherous; may they not be permitted then to take the first moments of leisure, and commit to writing those things which have affected their own hearts? May they not, in this manner, by a frequent review of what they have heard and written, maintain upon their souls a long and lively relish of divine truths, and preserve the sermon from being utterly lost? I know this is the practice of several who can use a pen, and I wish it were more universally practised. Perhaps we should not preach so many sermons, with so little profit to our hearers, in this manner; and why should the poor in an auditory be for ever cut off from this religious advantage, and forbid to use a pen for so sacred a service?

4. May not the poor have some little concerns of their own that relate to their souls, or their bodies, or their friends, or their engagements, and their circumstances in life? And must we suppose all their memories to be so extensive and capacious, so happy and faithful, as to preserve all these concerns, and recollect them whensoever they have occasion? Are not the memories of the rich perpetually unburdened, relieved, and assisted by the pen? Why may not the poor, in their little affairs, be indulged something of this benefit? Useful sentences, counsels, advices, moral and divine, must be forgotten, if they cannot write. Their little agreements, promises, duties, debts, transactions of life, and memorable providences, afflictions, blessings, all that belongs to their sphere of action for time and eternity, must be in danger of being lost out of their thoughts, if they cannot use a pen. Writing, what a blessed and divine invention! And must all the poor be for ever secluded from all the privileges of it, where they may be obtained with so much ease?

Here I might make a pathetic address to all those who, by mutual intercourse of letters, have maintained their love to their dear relations at a distance, and have felt the inward pleasure of receiving tidings of their welfare; I might address myself to those who have written or have received letters of piety to or from their friends, to those who have found the sweetness of recollecting past providences, by the help of their paper memoirs, and of preserving some useful sermon long on their memories by the aids of writing; have not these things been a matter of special refreshment and delight to you? Have you not counted it a very valuable advantage to yourselves? And why should you for ever deny your fellow-creatures, that are made of the same clay, and cast in the same mould as yourselves, why should you for ever deny all of them such benefits as these, when they may be attained at so easy a rate? And if you do not think proper, by your own liberality, to bestow this benefit on the poor, yet by all the sacred pleasure and

profit you have derived from the use of the pen, I entreat you not to discourage and forbid the liberality of others who would confer this privilege on them.

II. But in the second place, Consider whether a servant, incapable of writing, can be so useful to his master! Or whether it will not be some considerable advantage to superiors, to have their servants and their poor labourers able to make use of a pen?

1. May I have leave to ask, whether it be not far better they should be able to write their own names, when you employ them, if it were but to give a receipt for their weekly, or their monthly, or their yearly wages? Is not their name better than merely their scrawling marks, which are such poor doubtful and uncertain tokens of their own giving a receipt?

2. It is a frequent case that occurs in common life, that servants are sent out perhaps to a considerable distance, with messages to several persons at once, and at the same time are ordered to buy several little necessaries for different persons in the family: Their zeal and diligence, it may be, is great and unexceptionable, but their memory fails them, and they drop two or three of their orders by the way: They are chid at home, if the master be choleric, perhaps with some severity, the family is in great and present want of the necessaries they should have brought with them, and sensible inconveniences are hereby sustained: But all these inconveniences find an easy remedy, if the servant can use a pen: He puts down on a scrap of paper some memoirs of his several orders, and he punctually fulfils them all. This is a known and common case, and among other things may plead for servants learning to write.

3. When masters are at a distance from their households, and leave their servants in trust with their affairs, is it not a most unhappy thing if a household servant cannot communicate to his master by writing any sudden accident that may attend his concerns, his goods or his dwelling? If he cannot give notice of any new occurrence that relates to his master's interest? Is it not a most lamentable circumstance, if a servant be left in the city or in a country house for a few days together, and any terrible sudden calamity should attend his habitation or the family, and no servant could give notice of it to his distant master? Are not masters willing to know what messages have been left for them during their absence? And must every such message be trusted merely to the untaught and unfaithful memory of a servant, for many days together, till they shall see their master?

I know there are such cases, wherein persons of good figure in the world, who keep two dwellings at some distance from each other, are unwilling to hire those servants, whom they must leave behind them at one of their habitations, if they are not able to write; because they expect frequent notice from their servants by letter, whereby they may be informed of the affairs of one part of their family or another; and this makes their minds easy wheresoever they are, by the pleasurable tidings of the welfare of their absent children, and the regular conduct and peace of the distant part of their household.

4. I might add in the last place, If servants have never learned to write themselves, it is very seldom they are capable of reading what is written: And would it not be a great and frequent inconvenience to a master, when he is absent from his home, if he could not send a command to a servant in writing, about some necessary affair of his household, but this servant must go to some learned neighbour to read it for him, and

thus communicate the concerns of his master to any one who could assist him to read his master's letter? Let things of this kind, which are transacted between master and servant, be never so important and momentous, let it be never so much for the welfare of the family, the young children, the goods, or the estate, it is all one in this case where the servant cannot write: The loss must be sustained, the damage must be incurred, all inconveniences must be borne; and these masters, at least, may thank themselves for it, who discourage the support of these schools of charity, and will not suffer those of the lower rank of people to learn to use the pen of the writer.

Objection VI. But if we grant that the art of writing may be a convenience both to masters and servants, what necessity is there that the poor should learn arithmetic, or be acquainted with accompts? Their poor fathers managed their little affairs without figures, and why may not their children do so too?

Answer 1. All that is pleaded for of this kind is, that they may be taught to add and subtract little parcels of money, such as may come within their possession, or may be entrusted with them. Let it be considered, that it is the custom of the nation in our day to run much deeper in debt, and deal more generally upon trust and credit than was done in the days of our fathers; and even poor labourers are seldom paid every night, nor perhaps every week now-a-days: And is it not a hard case, if they may not have leave to learn to help their memories by short accompts of the money that is due to them, that in their demands they may neither do injury to their masters nor themselves? I am well assured, that for want of this, many mistakes have arisen, sometimes to the prejudice of the poor, and sometimes to the damage of those that employed them.

Answer 2. Or, suppose one of these poor unlearned children become a servant in a family, and the master entrust him with a small matter of money, to lay out for the common little necessaries of a week, how unable is he to account even for this little, without a pen and figures to help his memory? What lame and broken accounts must the master receive? Or he must take it upon content that his servant is honest, and accept of the general story, that so much is expended, without any notice of the particular detail of the things which are bought or paid for: Or else he must be troubled often in a day for every little necessary expence of life, and perhaps sometimes have his servant interrupt him in his great affairs with the narrative how he hath disposed of pence and farthings; and all this because his servant was never taught to add or subtract a few shillings.

Objection VII. But if it should be allowed that charity schools may teach the poor to write a little, and instruct them to make a few figures, and to add and subtract little sums of money, a few months would be sufficient for this. There is no need of three or four years schooling; no need of their learning to handle the pen in a nice and artful manner, to write a fine hand, and to excel in curious penmanship; no need of their entering into the learned languages, or the deeps of arithmetic, which are proper for divines and physicians, for merchants and their clerks, for accomptants and mathematicians, and the children of gentlemen.

Answer. I perfectly agree to all this objection, and acknowledge the justice of it, except in this one particular, *viz.* That a few months is time enough for this learning. I am sure so scanty a space of time is not sufficient to teach a youth of a common or low capacity the art of writing and accompts enough to serve all the purposes even of the lower ranks of life. If children are not pretty thoroughly instructed in it by their masters, and

acquainted with it by much repetition and practice, it has been often found that they forget these things before they come to make any use of them for any valuable purpose. Surely a year or more may be allowed for this part of their instruction without any inconvenience: The generality of children are not blessed with so swift a genius. This one thing being allowed, I would prosecute and urge the rest of this objection myself; for I do not think it reasonable that schools of charity should breed up children to all that politeness in any science, which should belong only to young persons of higher rank, and in better circumstances, and whose parents can furnish out a better education for them.

And here it may be confessed, that it is possible these niceties of learning, these refinements beyond the true design of charity schools, may perhaps have raised some aspiring conceits in the minds of those children, who are generally born for the lower offices of life. I cannot but take the liberty here to transcribe and recommend part of the Right Reverend the Bishop of London's* directions for this purpose: "If charity schools should grow by degrees into a more polite art of education, if the boys should be taught fine writing, &c. the girls fine working, and both of them fine singing, he grants, they would be too ready to value themselves upon their attainments, and this would have a natural tendency to set them above the meaner and more laborious stations and offices of life: All these things, therefore," says he, "should be carefully kept out of our charity schools; which doubtless will stand more clear of objections, and best answer the end of their institution, when they pretend to no more than to prepare children to be good christians and good servants."

This wise and sagacious prelate, who well knows the conduct and state of many of the charity schools in the church of England, saw sufficient reason for these cautions: He found that there were too many of these schools of ancient, if not of later foundation, wherein children are taught Latin, Greek, mathematics, and many parts of learning, which are by no means necessary for the poorer sort of mankind; and therefore he gives prudent advice against it. But the schools among the protestant dissenters have no such supports and endowments: They are poor in the contributions that support them; and as their poverty confines them to teach only a few plain and necessary things, so the very notion of charity schools should forbid these refinements, lest too much of the younger life of children should be spent therein, and be withheld from more necessary business and labour for their own maintenance.

Three years of diligence and application under prudent teachers, will furnish most of the children of the poor with reading, writing, and arithmetic, enough for their future stations of life, provided they are not taken into these schools too young: And indeed it is my opinion, they ought seldom to be admitted under eight or nine years old; and that when they have spent two or three years in learning, they may go forth to some of the harder labours and lower businesses of life that are suited to their rank. I confess, if it could be contrived so that half the day should be spent in labour, and half in learning, then they might be indulged in a larger space of time, and this mixture of labour and learning, would render the charity schools much more useful, and free from all exceptions; but of this I have spoken before.

And yet after all, I cannot but beg leave to put in one word of apology for here and there a lad of a bright genius, that may happen to be found in these schools of charity.

* Dr. Edmund Gibson.

If any one blessed with more sprightly talents of nature, should make a swifter progress in learning than his fellows, and discover uncommon seeds of ingenuity and science, let him not be thrust out of the schools sooner than his neighbours, out of a mere caution lest he should learn too much. I would become an intercessor, that he might not be turned abroad into the wide world, before the common term of years in that school is fulfilled, merely because he happens to have better parts than his schoolfellows, and hath improved his time better than they. This would be a most unreasonable and grievous discouragement of industry, and a hard penalty laid upon wit and virtue.

Objection VIII. But if these children of the poor, who are supported by the charity of others, be trained up in reading, writing and arithmetic, will not this render them qualified for clerkship or book-keeping, or any better sort of place or employment, where learning is necessary? And then they become "competitors for such places with others of equal talents, who have yet far better pretensions to them." The sons of tradesmen and mechanics, who have paid public taxes and parish dues, and even have given bread and clothes to the poor, their sons have a right to be employed in all these stations, as clerks or servants to merchants and others, wherein there is a prospect of advancement in life: And there are a thousand such in England. But if the charity-bred youth are preferred before them, it is taking the bread from those whose fathers have fed, and clothed, and fostered them, to the prejudice of their own children.

Answer. The foregoing account of the slender and low degrees of learning, which are bestowed on the children in our charity schools, seems to anticipate and exclude this complaint. There are none of these poor who are or ought to be bred up to such an accomplished skill in writing and accompts, as to be qualified for any of these posts, except here and there a single lad, whose bright genius, and whose constant application and industry, have outrun all his fellows: And for such a one I have pleaded before, that he might not be thrust out of school the sooner, and be punished merely for his ingenuity and diligence. As for the children or orphans of those who have fed and clothed the poor, and have lived in good fashion in the world, but have fallen into decay and poverty, I presume it would not displease the persons who make this objection, to see here and there one of them qualified for a little better business: For this is perfectly agreeable to their own sentiments, *viz.* That the children of persons who have lived well, and paid taxes, should have the first and chief benefits and advantages of lower life offered them, since they have the best pretensions to them.

Objection IX. Suppose it be allowed, that the children of the poor be indulged the favour of learning to read and write, to add and subtract a few figures, since you have shewn that these things are so useful to servants and labourers: But why then are they not all made servants either to gentlemen, to farmers, or to housekeepers? Why are they not bred up all to the plough in the country, or to be mere labourers in the city, or confined to household services or menial offices of life? "Why must any of them be placed out in a way of apprenticeship to trades and manufactures?" Even this is a discouragement to the children of those persons of a little higher rank who have paid taxes, and helped to maintain the poor in their parishes. And unless all these children of a little better rank were supplied with such trades, none of the poor bred up by charity should have the advantage of such apprenticeships.

Answer. In most of the schools of the country, and in some of those in London, both the boys and the girls are bred up with a design for service and hard labour abroad, or

for such mean works or businesses as their own parents can employ them in at home. The girls, as I have hinted before, are taught to read, spin, sew, and knit, and to perform domestic labours, and being made fit for service in families, they are placed out in such services. The boys are called home perhaps to assist their fathers in their poor labours of life, wherein they get their bread. But in some of the schools in and near London, and in some considerable towns, if there be a small provision made for their being put apprentices to the poorer trades, such as shoemakers, tailors, watermen, gardeners, workmen in timber, iron, &c. there are several considerations, which I have learned by converse about these matters, which may be offered in favour of it.

Consideration I. If all the children of the poor, both in city and country, were entirely cut off from trades and manufactures, there would not be families enough in England to receive them all as menial servants, or as retainers to the plough. And besides, one may ask the question, why should menial servants be multiplied beyond all necessity, since too many of them in great families are bred up rather in idleness than labour? The business of common handicrafts is much more laborious than the common domestic service in most families.

Consideration II. It is not menial servants, but mechanics and manufacturers, that increase the commodities, and thereby the riches of the nation. And if the wealth of the nation be more increased by the number of manufactures which the nation produces, why should the apprenticeships of some of the poor to those low mechanical trades in great towns and cities, be a forbidden exercise of bounty and charity? At least this argument will hold as to those mechanical businesses of life which are not already overstocked: And I have been assured, that the managers of charity schools have a just regard to this, in placing out the children of the poor.

Consideration III. The same assurances have also been given me, that there is great want of apprentices to several of these meaner trades: The master workmen address themselves frequently to the managers of these schools to help them to lads fit to be trained up in their trades and occupations. As the nation continually multiplies, so more of the necessaries of life are wanted, and increase the want of these mechanic arts. Let it be observed also, that the children of every common tradesman are aspiring to better business: The working shops and stalls of these meanest mechanic artificers want more hands, and seek for apprentices; so that there is no detriment done to the children of these tradesmen, by supplying them with servants out of our charity schools.

Consideration IV. Many of the children of these lower tradesmen are taught to read and write in our schools, and have instructions in the things of religion given them there. Such tradesmen, I mean, who are honest and industrious, but by reason of a numerous family, by losses or sickness, or other events of Providence, are kept still under poverty: Their children are not only taught in our charity schools, but also they enjoy the benefit of being placed out in apprenticeships proper to their character. And these very persons have thankfully accepted of the instruction of their children in these schools.

Consideration V. There is another reason that may encourage the managers of these schools to place out some children apprentices to manufacturers. Many of them are orphans, without father or mother, and they have no friends to provide business for them: Others have parents who cannot provide any employment for them: Now some children in the country, and multitudes who are born and bred up in London, would not know whither to go, or how to employ themselves, nor where to offer themselves for servants,

at eleven, or twelve, or thirteen years old: What family will take them in when they are capable of doing so little of the business of a footman? But at that age they may be employed in several of the manufactures of the land, if they are carefully and prudently placed in such a station.

Consideration VI. If these children are turned out of these schools to shift in the wide world too early, or to spend their time at random, many of them will forget their learning, and lose the benefits they had obtained by being taught in schools. Some of them would not only forget the good lessons of religion and morality, but even the knowledge of letters and syllables, till they cannot read their Bibles, and run wild again in the world: But when they are placed by the managers of these schools in sober families, they engage their masters to see that they keep their learning in some good measure, and make use of it.

Consideration VII. I add, in the last place, that if neither parents nor friends of any kind take care to fix children in some particular business, nor place them in sober families, where they may be under due government, they will be in danger of growing idle and slothful, they will wander about the streets and lanes, and lie exposed to all manner of iniquity. Sometimes the wicked propensities of nature, and sometimes the necessities of nature, will tempt them to cheating, stealing, robbing, &c. And they will be in danger of falling into shameless intemperance of every kind. The remains of their younger education may be some check upon them indeed, and lay their consciences under some restraint; yet at best in this great city, even children who are well instructed in their younger years, are too much exposed to wicked company and mischief, if there be no care taken to provide any fixed employment for them. But, on the other hand, as it is well expressed in Mr. Neal's Charity Sermon, page 19. "If you give them learning, and put them to a trade, you give them a lasting inheritance; for understanding, even in this sense, is a well-spring of life to him that hath it: It is a treasure that can never be taken from them; and therefore this must be the best way of shewing compassion to the children of the poor."

Objection X. But why must these children of the poor be clothed as well as taught? Why must they have a suit of new apparel given them yearly? This clothing makes the young creatures value themselves too highly, especially while their raiment is new: They are ready to think better of themselves than becomes them; and while they have it given them once a year, they are tempted to rank themselves with children of better fashion; their little souls are puffed up with pride, and their spirits are raised above their circumstances.

To this I answer in general. There are few schools of charity among dissenters, where the contributions arise high enough to provide clothing for the scholars: Nor is it necessary nor proper that it should be done where the money may be better expended in their instruction, or in training them up to such employments whereby they may support themselves, or where any inconveniences arising from it are greater than the good done by it. Yet where the liberality of benefactors will reach so far, in great towns, and especially in the chief city, there may be several things offered in the defence of it.

1. The covering of the poor and naked, in general, is a work of liberality approved in scripture, recommended to christians, and joined with that of feeding the hungry, and giving drink to those that are athirst, and it has a blessing pronounced upon it: Why then may not these poor children be sometimes the objects of such liberality, who have

scarce any garments to cover them? Indeed, many of them are so miserable in their own nastiness and their tatters, that they are hardly fit to come into a society that is well ordered, and to meet together in a school in order to their education, without some more convenient apparel than what their parents can provide them. This is an act of charity and bounty to the poor parents themselves, who are not capable to provide the necessaries of life for their offspring. Besides,

II. Let it be considered, that the clothes which are bestowed upon them once in a year or two, are of the coarsest kind, and of the plainest form, and thus they are sufficiently distinguished from children of better rank, and they ought always to be so distinguished. I grant, if their clothing were the same with that of other children of higher circumstances, the temptation might be strong, and the objection might have some force: But there is no ground for these charity children to grow vain and proud of their raiment, when it is but a sort of livery that publicly declares those who wear it to be educated by charity.

Let me add also, in the third place, that there are so great numbers of these charity schools erected by the members of the established church, not only in London, but in many other places too, where the children of the poor are taught and clothed, and put out apprentices to useful trades, that many of the poor among us would be laid under great temptations to send their children to these schools to be educated in those forms of worship which they disapprove, and in religious sentiments different from their parents.

Objection XI. I know it will be smartly replied here, "And where is the hurt of all this?" What if they are educated in all the forms of the church of England? Surely the difference between the dissenters and the church is not so great and formidable, but that the poor should be willing to accept of such an education for their children, since they are not able to bring them up without the charity of others.

To this I answer, First, That it is readily granted, that the religion itself, in substance of it, is the same which is professed and practised by both parties. God forbid that I should suppose that a good education of youth in the established church should prevent their usefulness here on earth, or their arrival at heaven. I hope and believe, there are thousands of holy souls in the church of England which are beloved of God, and shall be for ever happy in his presence. I love them heartily, and rejoice in the success of their ministers, and beg of God their labours may be more abundantly blessed to the honour of God, and the eternal happiness of a great multitude of souls.

Yet I beg leave humbly to mention what every body knows, that there are some forms and ceremonies which were invented by men, and which Christ never appointed, that are yet imposed on the ministers and the people in that church; not to mention some other disadvantages which the protestant dissenters have many times complained of. Now the poor have consciences as well as the rich; and the poor are concerned as well as the rich to have their children trained up in that way of worship which they think most agreeable to the will of God: And why should they be put under such temptations, to resign up their children to a different education, if there may be another provision made for them, by a very small exercise of liberality among their own richer friends, who have the same religious sentiments with themselves.

Since our governors have been so just and kind to us as to abolish those cruel and unrighteous laws which forbid us to worship God according to our consciences, or to

train up children in our own schools, why should not the poor among us be partakers of this privilege, as well as the rich? And why should not the rich among us be a little solicitous, that through their bounty and charity their poor brethren might enjoy the advantage of bringing up their offspring in their own way of worship, which the law of the land indulges, and which they themselves rejoice in? Besides, it should be added here, that in all our dissenting schools they are only taught the Assembly's Catechism, and in some they are brought once a day to attend the public worship in our congregations, without any private influences to set them against the church of England, or to make them bigots to any sect or party. As we refuse no children of the members of the established church, so we teach them nothing that I know of inconsistent with their continuance in that church.

In the second place, I answer, that though some few of these charity schools in the established church may perhaps indulge moderate principles, and have some favourable opinion of the protestant dissenters; yet it has been sufficiently evident, that too great a part of them have trained up children in a furious and blind opposition to all who separate from the church of England.

And if parents who know not these things, should be tempted, for the sake of clothes and apprenticeship, to permit their children to learn a different way of worship, which they do not so well approve of, yet it is hard to think that they should be almost constrained to send them to such schools as may not only fill their heads with party notions,* but also tincture their hearts with a bitter party zeal; such schools as may not only give them a set of different principles, but might indulge them to mock and deride the religious sentiments of their parents. And yet this might be the case in many places, where the protestant dissenters are very poor; they would fain have their children taught to read and write, yet perhaps there is no other charity school near them, but such as hates the name of a dissenter.

And after all, I must intreat leave to observe, that this is not the worst of the case. The children in many of these public schools would not only be brought up with an aversion to the religious sentiments and practices of their parents, but would be also in great danger of learning to hate the present government under his most excellent Majesty King George, and to rail at the establishment in the protestant succession, which is the glory of Great Britain, the defence of the reformed religion, and the securest guard of the liberties of Europe. This is not spoken at random, for I shall produce a most unquestionable authority for it, who declares it to have been lately so notorious, that it is not possible to be denied. Now the education of youth in such schools would not only prove the highest inconvenience and mischief to the children themselves, but a very great injury to the whole nation, and to mankind; and this would be the evident and unhappy effect, unless these schools are vastly reformed from these hateful practices, and freed from the dishonourable character which most of them bore, and which many of them merited in years past.

The Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of London, whose words I cited a little before, is a very great friend to these schools of charity; but he does not deny but that there has been too just ground for complaint some years ago, that in many of them the children have been trained up to a disaffection to our present government. His words are these:

* See Mr. Chandler's Sermon for the benefit of a Charity School, January 1, 1727-8, pages 34, 35.

"This is a very heavy objection indeed, *viz.* that in many of the charity schools the children are trained up to disaffection to the government, and it is a point that the government is nearly concerned to look after, since it is to little purpose to subdue and conquer the present ill humours, if a succession of disaffected persons is to be perpetually nursing up in our schools. And it is as little to be expected, that any persons who are well-affected to the government should contribute to the maintenance of such schools, as long as the opinion of this disaffection continues."

After that, his Lordship hopes and believes "that there is not at present the like ground to complain of disaffection in our charity schools, as there was some years ago;" yet he acknowledges, that "while the protestant succession remained doubtful, and no stone was left unturned to defeat it, some persons who had their views a different way, that is, jacobites, endeavoured to get the management of these schools into their hands, and to make them instrumental in nourishing and spreading aversion to the protestant settlement."—"Which," says he, "was so notorious, as well as from some particular recommendations of masters and mistresses, as from the behaviour of too many of the children themselves, that the fact as to that time cannot possibly be denied." His Lordship indeed concludes, "that there is great reason to believe that much of this leaven is worked out;" and he is willing to hope, that since things are better, true and loyal subjects will begin to think more favourably of them.

It must be confessed, his Lordship, who is a most sincere and hearty friend to the protestant succession in the House of Hanover, hath employed his zeal and influence to recover the charity schools of the established church from this bad character: But things are not changed all of a sudden; and his Lordship gives us but very low and doubtful indications of any universal change for the better, when he only tells us, "there is not the like ground to complain of disaffection as there was some years ago, and there is great reason to believe much of this leaven is worked out," though perhaps there may be too much of it still remaining. And what a dismal thing would it be, if a great part of the poor among the protestant dissenters, whose zeal for the present government is their known and constant glory, if these very persons, by the temptation of clothing and trades to be provided for their children, should be allured to place them under such sorts of masters and mistresses as the Bishop describes? What if their children should abhor, mock, and ridicule the particular modes of religion which their parents practise; if they should ridicule and curse their parents for fanatics and presbyterians? And at the same time, if these young creatures should be in danger also of growing up to practise sedition and rebellion against our excellent King and his posterity in years to come. I heartily join with his Lordship to hope better things, and wish his zeal for a reformation may have great success.

Yet I think I ought to add a word in this place also, in favour of the poor of the church of England, who love and value the present government, and the protestant succession: What a grief would it be to them, if they should find their own children, when grown up, to become enemies to the illustrious House of Hanover, and to be deeply tinctured with such principles as are contrary to the interest of Great Britain, and to the civil and religious liberty of men and christians?

On this occasion, therefore, I think it may not be amiss to request every subscriber for the support of any charity school to make due and strict enquiry, whether the teachers

and governors of it are hearty and zealous friends of the present government, that they may not lay out their money to propagate sedition instead of virtue, and to nourish the seeds of rebellion in the rising age, and lay a foundation for our future slavery and ruin.

Wheresoever, therefore, there is the least danger of this kind, surely every true Briton must consent to say, "Let charity schools among protestant dissenters go on to clothe the naked, and to furnish the poor with trades, and to breed them up in all the forms of useful knowledge and industry, lest their needy parents should be tempted to venture them into dangerous nurseries, and lest their children should grow up to become the factious disturbers of our protestant government, as well as the persecutors and tormentors of their parents." If some persons are still of opinion that the clothing of poor children may be attended with some inconvenience, I think it is but a small one, and it ought to be endured rather than the danger of a far greater evil should be incurred.

Upon the whole, I conclude, that those who are dissatisfied with the clothing of children in these schools of charity among the dissenters, are desired to contribute something towards their being taught to read, and write, and cast accompts; that they may be disposed of to some of the lowest businesses of life: Those that are displeased with their using the pen, or their learning to make figures, let them contribute something towards their learning to read the Bible! Or if there are any persons that can suppose that this is too much knowledge for them, yet even then they may give something towards the forming their rude and ignorant minds, and correcting their brutal manners, towards their being taught in a school something of religion, and a catechism that they may learn to worship God, and know their duties to men.

If you have any desire that the poor of the nation should not be left to grow up in all manner of vice and iniquity, and become a burden and nuisance to the kingdom; if you have any value for the preservation of property, for the propagation of virtue or religion, and the transmission of them to the next age; if you have any tenderness for the immortal souls of mankind, and any zeal for the honour of God in the growing generation, bestow a mite towards the support of this most useful and generous charity: Give something towards the instruction and education of a company of wretched young creatures, that they may be taken from the street, that they may be rescued from the vile company of those that curse and swear, rob and steal, that they may be kept from fatal temptations to drunkenness, lewdness, and vile intemperance, and be preserved from sin and ruin.

If by the good effects of this slender education which you bestow upon them, they should ever hereafter grow up to become useful members of civil society, and a blessing to the world, the following age shall thankfully acknowledge your hand in it, and the children themselves shall call you blessed: And above all, if they are by this means trained up to the fear of God, to the faith of Christ, and the practice of sincere piety, there will be so many precious souls rescued from the gates of hell, and so many blessed inhabitants added to the heavenly regions. What a grateful and surprising pleasure will it be to you to see such a glorious harvest sprung up there from your grains of charity scattered here on earth? What an unspeakable joy to reflect that you have been made the happy instruments of this salvation! And your labour of love shall not be forgotten in the great and solemn day of recompence.

AN APPENDIX,

Containing a short Account of the signal and surprising Appearances of God in his Providence for the Erecting and Support of a Charity School among the Pietists, or Puritans, in Germany.

IT is now about thirty years ago, that some masters of art, in the University of Leipsic, in Saxony, set up a private conference among themselves for the better understanding of scripture, and for the regulating their studies and their conversation accordingly: The first part of that exercise was critical, to find out the literal meaning of the text, and the other part consisted in the deducing of propositions and practical uses from it. This was kept up with good success for some time in a private chamber, after evening service was over on Sundays. One of the persons concerned in this affair was Mr. Augustus Hermannus Frank. Many of the young students were powerfully wrought on by this plain and practical way of reading the Bible, and excited to an ardent love for the study of the holy scriptures, rather minding now the hearty reformation of their souls and conversion from darkness to light, than unnecessary strifes and disputes. They always begun and ended with prayer.

When this thing began to have a wider spread and influence, the other students, who had no mind to enter upon a new course of life, in derision called them Pietists, as our fathers in England were called Puritans, and much on the same account. The clamours against them grew fierce and violent, the pulpits rung with this new name of reproach, ecclesiastical courts bestirred themselves, and the first instruments of pietism were banished from Leipsic: Mr. Frank was persecuted from place to place, till at last, by the providence of God, he was chosen professor of the oriental languages at the University of Hall, and pastor of Glaucha, in the suburbs of that city.

This good man, when he was settled at Glaucha, being grieved at the gross ignorance of the poor, and at their wicked lives, appointed them to come every Thursday to his house, in order to make some charitable distributions amongst them, and to instruct them in the things of God. This was about the year 1694. The next year he fixed an alms-box in his parlour, and in a little time a certain person put into it at once about the value of eighteen shillings and sixpence. He took this in his hands, and said in full assurance of faith, "This is now a considerable fund, worthy to be laid out in some important undertaking; wherefore, I will even take this for the foundation of a charity school." The same day he bought as many books as cost eight shillings, and then got a student to teach the poor children two hours in a day. He fitted up a place before his study for a charity school, and fixed a box on one of the walls. At the top thereof, he set down these words: "For defraying the charges of putting to school poor children, and providing books and other necessaries;" Anno MDCXCV. And at the bottom, Prov. xix. 17. *He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and, that which he hath given, will he pay him again.*

"We had," saith he, "many poor children brought together before we had built a house to receive them: In the mean time, the Lord inclined the heart of a person of quality to lay out the sum of a thousand crowns for the use of the poor: And two other persons supplied us with four hundred crowns to encourage the design on foot."

Much of this money was spent in feeding, and clothing, and instructing the orphans, before they begun to build an hospital; and, as the author expresses it, "The Lord knows we had not so much as would answer the cost of a small cottage, much less a building

as might hold two hundred people: But the Lord strengthened my faith, and on July 13, 1698, the foundation of an hospital was laid in the name of God; and as for the building itself I was to wait upon God, and from week to week receive at his hand what he would be graciously pleased to furnish me with for carrying on the same."

The pious author goes on and informs us how successfully the building proceeded, in opposition to all the froward censures of ill-meaning people, by the most unforeseen and amazing instances of the liberality of persons known and unknown, which brought in daily, weekly, and sometimes hourly supplies both for the support of the orphans and the building of the house; till it has at last arisen to such a fair extent, and to the support and instruction of so many hundreds of the poor, as to become the glory of the German churches, the wonder of the nations, and the most miraculous instance of the effect of faith and prayer that was ever known of this kind, not only since the days of the apostles, but perhaps since the creation.

It is hardly possible to read the account without a sacred astonishment. There we find to what an extreme necessity they were at several times reduced in the building, and yet before night their supplies were as suitable, sufficient, and surprizing, as if an angel had been appointed to oversee the work, and to take care that the workmen were paid.

God has not only manifested his divine approbation of charity schools by such a perpetual series of testimonies, as it were, from heaven promoting this building and supplying their wants, but the success of this work in the conversion of a multitude of souls here, and in spreading vital religion through many adjacent countries, gives a further demonstration how pleasing it has been to God.

Out of these schools, under the care of this great and pious man, hath proceeded a great number of pious and learned tutors for gentlemen's children, schoolmasters and divines, who have done much towards the spreading a new and lively savour of christianity through many of the provinces of Germany; and besides this, they have educated multitudes of honest and pious christians who were taken in here as orphans, and who have been placed out to various trades, artifices, and labours in life, whereby there is a considerable reformation in those parts of the world, and a glorious change from a cold formal lifeless profession of religion, to the practice of solid piety and goodness.

The late Rev. and pious Dr. Josiah Woodward, the present Right Rev. Dr. Kennet, Bishop of Peterborough, and other divines of the church of England, have given their public encomiums of this strange and surprising work of liberality several years ago. It was a most heavy and painful stroke which this glorious scene of piety and charity sustained last year, by the death of the most excellent founder, Professor Frank; but the work is still carried on by his worthy successors, and may the same happy success still attend it through a rich supply of the Spirit of Christ among them.

The larger account of these things is contained in several narratives, written by Professor Frank himself, and by the late pious Mr. William Anthony Boehm, chaplain to the late Prince George of Denmark; these are all put together, and prefaced by Dr. Woodward; printed by Mr. Downing in Bartholomew-close: and are well worth the perusal of the present age, to let them see there is a Divine Providence in the world, and a divine approbation of sincere works of charity.

END OF VOL. II.

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